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THE WILD KNIGHT;
OR
THE UNKNOWN CRUSADER.

A TALE OF GERMANY IN THE DAYS OF THE EMPIRE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

CHAPTER IV.

LOVE UNDER A CLOUD.

The road of our travellers lay through one of the wildest and most romantic sections of Germany. Just upon the edge of the Black Forest, among mountains, and rocks, and woods, and ravines; with ever and anon deep chasms yawning at their feet, and the mountain streams dashing along in mad torrents below them. The scene inspired the love of the Eagle, and in eloquent language he pictured his emotions. Agnes soon gave him her undivided attention, and ere long she joined him in conversation. Engelbert, with a perception that did credit both to his heart and head, rode by the side of his esquire, and thus the lovers were left alone without hearing at first perceived it. They were lovers, even in that short time, and they both knew it, and it was this thought that ever and anon brought a cloud upon Agnes's brow. As she gazed upon the man by her side, and thought how brave, how generous, how noble, how good, and how handsome he was, she felt her heart grow warm, and her love went forth perpetually and true, but then would come the memory of Rudolf of Baden—the will of her dying father, and the chilling cause upon her spirit. Yet she betrayed not her fears to her companion, for he gave her little time to chatter them. From the subject of the country and the scenery about them, the Knight went to the story of the trials and triumphs of the Christians in Palestine.

Thus passed several hours, and at the end of that time, as a sharp climax ceased, the Crusader gazed upon his fair companion with an earnest, prayerful look. She looked up and met his gaze, and a warm glow suffused her face. She knew not that he was looking upon her, or she would not have gazed up then, for her eyes were brimming with the tale of love, and she knew it. And a few interested persons thus heard, and not with less perception, could not have failed to see that the Knight's gaze was one of pure, devoted affection.

It was a moment of strange emotions. Each had detected the other in the act of pouring out the silent language of love. The Knight was the first to speak.

"Gentle lady," he said, in a tone made rich and musical by the deep feeling that sustained it, "why should two honorable people, whom fate has thrown together, hide the deepest, holiest emotions of their souls? I will not hide mine. You shall not my I could look what I dared not speak. Agnes of Luxemburg, I love thee with the whole strength of my heart, and with the purified power of my heart's first love. Thou art the first maiden who ever awoke the most whisper in my soul, and to thee I give my pure heart with all its hopes, its aspirations, and its joys. I trust I have not offended."

For some moments the fair girl gazed down upon the arching neck of her steed before speaking; she trembled violently, for there was a mighty struggle in her soul.

"Alas!" she at length uttered, raising her moistened eyes to her companion's face, "would that my love and my duty were united!"

"How, lady? Speak plainly, I beseech thee."

"Knowest thou not that my father willed that I should wed with the Count of Baden?"

"I have had no such word. Does he lay the command upon thee?"

"He never commanded me, sir. He will was always my law. When he expressed to me his desire he knew that if it were in my power to do it, his desire should be accomplished. Sir Knight—"

"But thy love, lady?"

"Thou art the first man who ever won my young heart. See—I am frank because thou hast been."

"Bless thee, gentle Agnes—bless thee forever. Then dost love me, then?"

"With all my heart."

"Then are we still have ground for hope. If the Lord of Baden be an honorable man, he will not surely hold thee to a union from which love must ever be absent. He would not have such a wife if he could."

"Ah—you know him not!" said Agnes, with a faint shake of the head. "Nor do you know the man whom my father placed over me as my guardian. Alas! they have no hearts of love or sympathy."

The Knight gazed upon his companion as she spoke, and when she ceased ceased he bowed his head. There was a cloud upon his brow, and his lips were compressed; yet he seemed more worked upon by some strong power of his own, than by any fears of the powers of others. When he again raised his head his bright eye was clear, and his tone more ordinary meaning.

"Gentle one," he said, "love me—love me well—love me as I love thee—and leave the rest to me. In this universe of good there must be power enough to overcome all evil. If it could only be properly applied; and so why may we not hope that right and justice shall triumph here?"

"My love I cannot control," the maiden answered. "Were I never to see thee again, from this hour my heart could never grow up from image—my soul could never forget this, its first holy love. As true as I live, I speak frankly and truthfully now. Were the painful clause removed;

THE BATTLE FOR ARMS OF LUXEMBURG.

could the barrier be broken down—honorably so—I would place my hand within thine own, and be thine forever!"

The noble Knight raised his hand to his cheek and brushed away a tear, and when he spoke his voice was low and warm.

"Among the blessings of God, and standing second only to the pure faith of the blessed Christian, is bright, sunny hope. Let us cling to it."

As these words were spoken Sir Engelbert rode up and asked if 'twas not time for dinner.

"I am hungry," he said, "for I am of the decided opinion that our generous meal of the morning sharpened my appetite. See: Here is a lovely spot. The grass is green and glossy—yonder stream must be fresh and pure—and this huge cliff will keep off the chill from the towering more of the peaks of Durmenwald."

Agnes signified her assent to the proposition, and the party stopped and dismounted. The steeds were removed from the mouths of the horses, and while they fell to cropping the new, sweet grass, Robert and Bernard set out the food which the thoughtful butler of the convent had provided. During the meal the conversation turned upon the noble knights of Swabia, and Agnes gave her companion much information concerning them.

"They are of various grades and castes," she said, after she had related several of their more daring exploits. "Some waylay travellers and rob them—some join common outlaws—while some even go so far and so low as to strip the poor peasant of his all."

"But they are not knights," said the Black Eagle, earnestly.

"Yes, sir. Some of them are knights who have returned from the Crusades—most of them are such—and finding themselves without land or money, they must labor, as they have been laboring, with their arms. There are no wars going on in which they can engage, and so they make war upon every one they meet. And then there are a few who still hold their knightly honors of much worth. My guardian is such an one. Nothing low than a wealthy monastery can tempt him, and seldom that. He makes war mostly upon cities and wealthy towns. Sometimes he goes from his castle with from four to six hundred knights and men-at-arms in his train; and when he means to attack a powerful city he will engage all the noble knights of about him. But I think their race will soon be run. An imperial counter emperor has long since sat the covered, and he told us that the Emperor was already taking measures to sweep them off."

"But, if I mistake not, the Emperor himself used to belong to their troops before he received the crown," remarked Engelbert.

"Certainly he did," returned Agnes. "And now he means to sacrifice his old friends to win favor with the cities and the peasantry; for, to speak truly, Rudolf of Hapsburg is not very popular."

"And Rudolf of Baden," said the Unknown, in a low tone, that could not reach the ears of the ear—"what is he?"

"Below the will Count Everhard, for he will even rob a church!"

"Impossible!" cried our hero, starting with astonishment. "Baden—rob a church! A German Count steal to that!"

"He even so."

The Black Knight arose from the stone whereon he had been sitting, and walked away by himself; but ere long he came back, and the warm, bright smile was upon his face once more.

As soon as the horses had rested sufficiently, which fact they were foolish enough to manifest by cropping about, the bits were set, and the party again mounted and started on. Half the afternoon had passed away, and the travellers had just entered upon a broad table of level land, when Engelbert's horse, which was ahead, suddenly stopped and placed his nose to the ground; and in a moment more he raised his head and gave a wild, startling snort.

"Ah—that means that we are to meet somebody," said the Black Knight, as Agnes gazed inquiringly towards him.

For a moments an expression of fear dwelt upon the maiden's face; but it quickly passed away.

"We have nothing to fear, surely?" the Knight resumed. "If they be robbers we have nothing to lose, and if they be not robbers they must be friends. Yet I'll don my casque and take my shield, for use sometimes comes when we least expect it."

As he thus spoke he exchanged his velvet cap for the black steel helm with its triple plume, and then calling to his esquire, he took his shield. Just as Engelbert had made the same arrangement a party of three knights appeared upon the opposite side of the plain, which was nearly half a mile distant. As the distance became less, an exclamation of fear dropped from Agnes's lips, and when her companion looked upon her, he found her pale and trembling.

"What is it?" he asked, eagerly.

"*The Count of Baden!*" she uttered.

"The Count! Which one?"

"He that rides upon the right hand—the short one!"

And do you know who are those other two?"

Agnes looked a few moments, and then she replied,

"Aye—they are two of the most villainous knights that ever broke knightly vows. There is Sir Frederick von Bondorf, who came from Bavaria, and who left his head from the lips of Sir Herman Mostanl, a crafty, bloody, and unscrupulous Italian. They are the Count's tools, and do his bidding for hire."

"They look like stout knights," said the Eagle, half to himself.

"And so they are," responded Agnes.

"But you mentioned, dearest—"

"Aye—the Count may be on his way to Saint Fulvia."

"Ah! Further! Now I see. And why should he have come? Think you Everhard sent him?"

The maiden pondered a few moments ere she replied, and during her hesitation the Knight stopped.

"I'll tell thee all in a few words," she at length said. "I can save thy questions. My guardian will do much for the Count of Baden. He would not for words directly do a deed to harm me; yet he looks upon my marriage with the Count as a fate that he will help it on. Therefore when I refused to go to Baden's stout castle of Heidelberg, and Rudolf has sworn that he would take me to his dwelling by force, if I would not go otherwise. The last time I saw my guardian he told me, in a laughing mood—he laughed because he thinks my coyness of the Count is only the result of whim; he does not know that I despise him—he told me to beware of Rudolf of Baden, for that he meant to kidnap me on the first opportunity. So I think he has come now for that purpose."

"But what can be his object? Tell me all, and then I shall know how to act."

"Why—he can see that I like him not, and it may be for envy. He will not lose my broad lands and noble castles if he can help it. He thinks if he can once get me into his hands, he can worry me into the marriage."

"You think so?"

"I know it, for he told one so who communicated the fact to my cousin."

"Then you will not go with him, even if he wrests you?"

"Oh, sir—No—ah—yes—yes! You must not peril your life. I know those knights, and they are very powerful."

"You have not answered my question, lady. Would you rather I should conduct you to your guardian, or give you up to those men if they demand you?—Ah—stop—I want the simple truth of your heart."

"Why—surely I would rather go on with you, for I fear that bad man; but then—"

"But then," interrupted the Black Knight, with a smile, "to our good abbess of Saint Fulvia I pledged my life that I would conduct thee safely to thy guardian. Perhaps you heard it?"

"Yes."

"Then say no more. And as for risk, be assured I am proof against the arms of all villain knights."

The new comers were now within a few rods, and as the Count of Baden recognized Agnes, he put spurs to his horse. As he did so the Unknown dropped his visor and securely loosened the strapping of his heavy battle-axe. He of Baden was in full armor, only he wore his visor up.

"Ha—my little truant!" the Count cried, as he drew up a few yards off. "I have found thee most opportunely. I was after thee, sweet one."

With a powerful effort Agnes overcame the tumultuous emotions that shook her frame, and then in a respectful manner she replied,—

"I am on my way to Heidelberg. I am going to the castle of my guardian."

"So you informed when you started. I saw the noble Count, thy guardian, this morning, and he bade me come and take thee. And so you see I have come. Sir Knight, I will relieve thee of thy charge."

"Were I anxious to give up my charge I might thank thee for thy kindness," returned our hero, calmly and modestly. "But as I assumed the charge for a specified purpose, I must do my pledge. Still, you will allow me to thank you all the same."

The young Count was at first puzzled by this. He was young for the place of power he occupied, being not yet thirty; but he had much experience, and was accounted one of the best and surest heroes in Baden.

Before he could answer, however, their attention was called in another direction, where two more knights had appeared upon the field. Agnes of Luxemburg drew a long, painful breath, and her cheek once more blanched with fear, for in the two horsemen who had thus their appearance she recognized Sir Otto of Metzinger and Count of Malchandt! She knew that their souls were full of revenge against her noble lover; and let it a wonder that she trembled with the thought of her two faithful friends meeting such fearful armed knights! Her heart sank within her as the conviction came that she must now go with the hated Count von Baden!

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER V.

THE BATTLE.

"Look ye, Sir Knight—for thy garb betrays thee such—let me know with whom I am speaking, and then we may the sooner come to an understanding."

"Thou art speaking with an honorable gentleman—with a knight who never broke his vows, and who holds his given word sacred unto death."

Again the count pondered ere he spoke in reply, and he trained he was upon the point of a hot rejoinder, but he allowed it to pass unheeded. For there was something in the tone and bearing of the stranger that smote him strangely. At length, however, he turned to Agnes, and with some stern-ness in his manner, he said,

"Lady, I have come for thee, and I trust that you will at once place yourself under my care."

The maiden gazed upon the count uneasily. Never before had he appeared to such disadvantage as now. His short, stumpy form; his pale of deep, fiery red; his face of hard, sensual, and almost foolish expression; and his known character of cruelty and avarice, were now in direct contrast with the tone, the bearing, and the character of her new-found friend. With a tremulous emotion she answered,

"I have no right, sir, to leave the care of one who has confided to me as my safety. My good aunt has placed me where I am, and I can only be released by the free act of this noble knight."

"Ah—you've seen his face, have you not?" asked the count.

"I have."

"And it is fair to look upon, I'll warrant!" he continued, with a bitter curling of his lip and other lip. "But," he added, turning to the Unknown, "let me have no more words. I demand of you the lady; and let me inform you that I have the right so to do."

"I make no question," returned our hero, calmly but emphatically. "Thou art not the Castle of Shatzart, and, consequently, I cannot deliver the lady into your hands. If you wish to gain her you must prove you must follow me to the dwelling of Everhard von Wurtemberg, and there you may find her."

"Now, by Saint Paul, thou hast crossed the bound of life!" cried the count, lowering his visor as he spoke, and drawing in his rein; "Give up the girl, or roll you in the dust!"

"Sir, thy lance at rest, good sir, and ride away," said the Black Knight, proudly. "Thou art no match for me."

"Ha! sayest thou so? By the Holy Apostles, thou shalt prove it! Know that it is Rudolf of Baden whom thou hast met!"

"And thou hast met the BLACK KNIGHT OF PALESTINE!" thundered the other, quickly.

Rudolf of Baden started at the sound of this name, and his brave was seen to tremble in his hand. But he soon recovered himself, and then, in a tone of unutterable hatred, he cried:

"By my baldric, Sir Knight of the Eagle, thou art the very man I would have met. Thou dost yield for Rudolf of Baden!"

"As you will," calmly replied our hero.

Then, with the count turned his horse and dashed off some distance.

"Now, gentle one," said the noble knight, as he saw that she trembled. "I shall not harm that one, and you may rest assured that he cannot harm me."

"What, he, there?" cried the count, who had heard and marked his name. "Now look to thyself!"

The Black Knight immediately placed himself on the defensive, but he made no movement forward.

"Will thou start on?" asked Rudolf of Baden.

"Mind not my movements, sir. Come you as it best suits you."

"Then here's for Baden and the Lady Agnes of Luxemburg!" shouted Rudolf, as he put spurs to his beast and dashed on.

The Crusader's bone knew as well what he was to do as did his master; and, moreover, he was surely being both pride and courage. At the same moment the noble Knight leaped quickly to the left hand—the lance of the count was turned easily away, while his opponent's weapon caught him by the breast of the right arm, fairly bearing him down over the horse's neck behind, and sending him with a heavy shock upon the prickly sand.

It was some moments ere Rudolf arose; but he got upon his feet at length, and as he threw up his visor for fresh air, his face was seen to be very pale, and wrought upon by deep, dark passion.

"Ha!" he cried, as Sir Otto and Sir Metzinger and his companion rode up, "now are you free."

Do you know you braggart knight?"

"Aye—I think I do. I had a tilt with him this very morning. He snatched a golden prize from my grasp, too."

"And you like revenge?"

"I do, sir."

"Then join me now.—What ho—Bondorf! Remind! where are ye?"

The two knights answered to the call, and as they spanned the count mounted his horse again, and took his sword.

"Now, Sir Braggart!" he cried, in an insulting tone, addressing the Black Knight: "Will ye give me up the damsel?"

"Of course I shall not."

"Then thou must prepare be upon thine own head! I have made known my claim, and you have refused. Now I must enforce my claim. Those brave gentlemen are under my orders; and to make the work short they will help me. Yet thou shalt have one more opportunity. Will thou release the lady Agnes or no?"

"Oh!" gasped the maiden, urging her way to the position of the noble Knight, "do not! Oh! not for me! They will surely kill you, for they now seek revenge!"

"Hush, lady. Believe me—we are a host at power against which they cannot prevail.——Sir, and you, noble knights, I am sorry to make you cause," what say you?"

"This!" was the reply. And as he spoke he drew his battle-axe.

Quick as thought the Black Eagle, as the same time drawing his own ponderous axe. It was a fearful weapon in the hands of him who now wielded it. Its long, sharp edge could not be easily unturned through the toughest helm, and the man that received its blow must be more than sagacity.

The two crusaders left their esquires with Agnes, and then rode forward. Sir Otto had left his steed to pursue some other course probably that they might rob some farm-house. So there were five armed knights against them.

"Sir Knights," spoke he of the Eagle, in a loud, commanding tone, "I ask ye for free passage to Stuttgart. I am on an errand of peace, for I have had war enough. Yet woe be unto that man who shall dare oppose me! Will ye move aside and let me pass?"

"Will ye give up the Lady of Luxemburg?"

"Not so you?"

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"Then take the reward of thy temerity! Ho! my brave fellows—at them!"

His men came down the forest out the crevasses in their saddles. The Count of Baden was wary, for though he had flashed out in extreme, yet he controlled the enemy, he caused his horse to rear he controlled the enemy, he caused his horse to rear and plunge, and the consequence was that Landolf went to the left, and met the Black Knight first. The latter received the blow of Sir Frederick's sword upon his shield, and then, with the same blow of his powerful arm, he cracked the helm of his adversary down upon his crown, and the knight was reeling in the mud. Ere you he could fairly recover his aim, the sword of Rudolf was upon his head; but his assailant was no unskilled one, for he parried the stroke, and stunned he only parried the sword's forked point.

His rage was now at its height, and from a blow of Engelbert's axe, and as the Black Knight caught a heavy stroke from Rudolf's sword upon the edge of his backler, he had the misfortune of seeing his companion strike the Knight of Middlebrook from his saddle.

"Rudolf of Baden," he said, as soon as he could speak, "I could not have done this. For this fair lady's sake I would spare thee."

"Ha! thou art kind when thy craven heart fails thee! For the lady's sake, thou unknown Cross, I'll strike thee to the death!"

Then far the count had spoken, under the impression that the adversary's backwardness was the result of humility; but he could not brand his mistake, for, as he could finish the slanderous sentence, the Black Knight struck a blow upon the side of the head with the flat of his axe that made the count reel from his saddle to his neck.

"How with you, sir?" our hero cried, turning to Mordard, who sat calmly in his saddle, a short distance off.

The crafty Italian was a brave man enough, and one who would not shrink from danger; but, as to the other hand, he blood was cool in other words, he could not be one of needless risk of danger. He had seen enough of the crusaders to assure him that he was no match for either of them. If he had watched the affair narrowly, and had seen, from the first, that the Knight of the Eagle was only fighting with the greatest caution, for he saw that the life of the latter had been purposely spared.

"This is no quarrel of mine, brave sir," he adventurously replied, with the strong instinct of self-preservation, "and I have not any friend but I can seen his life was in danger; but I was that you meant not to slay him, and I am willing for self."

"You are right, sir," rejoined our hero: "it would not willingly have shed one who was yet to be the only protector of the lady I now love in honorable charge; and if he will promise me that a fluttery blow than I intended he must lay it to his bandaging scars."

As soon as the Black Knight found that the Italian would not counsel, he leaped from his saddle, and went to look at the wounded, and Sir Engelbert soon joined him in the work. They found that Sir Mathurin Gaul, and Sir Count Frederick von Rossdorf. Those two were past praying for. But Sir Otto Weil, Sir Landolf, and Sir Rudolf, and while the Count of Baden already showed signs of life.

"Here, Sir Knight," said our hero, addressing the Italian, "you can easily bring your friend back to his senses; and as we must leave them with you, for the day is on the decline, and we must be on our way."

Mordard said he would attend to them, and thoroughly the crusaders mounted their steeds and journey.

The Black Knight and Agnes rode side by side for some time without speaking. Upon the fair face of the maiden there was a deep shade of fear, and in that of the gave manifestation of her daughter.

"Noble sir," she said, tremulously, "I fear you have taken upon yourself a fearful load in my behalf."

"How so?" the knight asked, lightly.

"You have made an enemy of the powerful count, and through his influence you may find many more. Oh! had you asked me Dallas he stead of one of the others it would have been better."

"Ah—why is that?"

"Mordard is a villain of the deepest dye; and to the death of his master he would not hesitate to murder you."

"He cannot," he knight replied, lightly.

"The count to his master. Alas! I fear you have made trouble for you, lady?"

"But I have made no trouble for you, lady?"

"Oh, no. You have saved me from a very disagreeable position."

"Then you should give me joy. Hereafter Why—dear, lady, I feel that the hours years I have not breathed save with enemies on all hands."

"Ah—but they were open, known enemies. These will be as serpents. The count will be hidden under a smiling mask, and their fangs made to guard a festering tongue."

"I thank for reminding me of it," said the knight, with a kind smile, "for now I shall be on my guard. Have no fear, dear lady, because you be holding such fears, for I assure thee I am safe. I would not make so unchivalrous as the Knight of Wartemberg if I can help it, but I fear not Rudolf of Baden."

The crusader's words were so easily and frankly spoken, and his manner was so calm and assured, that Agnes's fears were lulled, and the two kept up conversation flowed joyously and freely.

And the Unknown was the knight of deep, dark villainy of which his newly made enemies were capable, he might not have felt so perfectly assured. But all ignorant of the danger that hovered for a more careful watch than he now deemed necessary. In his way of honor he could not have conceive of such meanness as characterized some of the knights of Germany. He did not fully realize the bad ends that develop the ingenital throne. Had he known that those who sat in the highest places of the empire were those who held the basest of government and administered the affairs of the great nation—even the emperor himself—he, he might not have wondered that the spirit had crept up into the towns and castles. And perhaps there will that he did not know it, for he was comparatively happy now, as he surely could not have been with all the knowledge upon his soul.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WILD KNIGHT AND HIS CASTLE.

One of the strongest castles in the empire was that of Count Everhard of Wartemberg. Though it could be in Stuttgart, yet it was some miles from the city, and in a corner a little north of west. It was upon a spur of the mountains of the Black Forest, and so situated that a mere handful of men could have defended it against an army. It was built upon a huge rock, three sides of which were nearly perpendicular, and the whole of the top of the promontory was occupied by the structure. The court was of an irregular form, with two right angles and one obtuse; and the acute. The walls were very thick—thick enough for the bowmen to ride three abreast, and on the inside a space of some three hundred square rods. Upon each of the angles were the towers of the gate, and two smaller towers at the gate. The main building, or the lord's residence, was at the northwest corner, on the highest side of the mountain. Here was the apartments set by the highest tower of the castle. Underneath this, and occupying the obtuse angle, was the servant's building, which was connected with the former by a covered passage. Opposite the lord's house, on the other hand, and occupying the right angle of the two longest walls, was the dwelling of the common people and such retainers as might at any time be within the castle walls, being accommodated by five long, dead men. Then, on the other side—on the longest walls—were the stables, within which there were seldom less than from three to five hundred horses. Many a princely stable had been robbed that the Count of Wartemberg might have horses to suit him. Between the stables and the barracks was the armory, and here was a store of arms that transcended all works of art for such a purpose. The gate stood upon the edge of a precipice, and perpendicular, or wall of rock, while directly opposite, and distant some twenty feet, was the brow of another precipice, between the two was a deep, yawning chasm, through which poured, with a continuous roar, a mountain torrent, that emptying itself into the Neckarbach, some ten or fifteen miles distant. In order to reach the castle from the north, a bridge must also be reached, as from these there was a winding way of descent, which seemed to have been constructed for the very purpose of being defended with the fewest men and horses. The drawbridge was a massive piece of timber, and was being thoroughly braced and bolted together, and stout bulwarks, or parapets, upon the sides of the passage-way, served to strengthen the whole. This was so contrived that a single horse could raise it easily; and when it was down it could be secured so easily by any being without wings was next to an impossibility. This bridge, with the gate, formed one end upon the opposite precipice, and it was wide enough for six horsemen to ride out or in abreast.

The only place where an army of besiegers could have thought of making an attempt upon the castle would have been upon the eastern side, for there the rocks were, as this was the highest of the rock which was not nearly perpendicular. But even here the foe would have been a difficult one for an enemy to approach, and as there were several places where only one man could advance at the same time. And then, upon the top of the wall here, and upon the roof of the stables, were always large quantities of huge stones, so that even the women could have rolled off upon the devoted heads of those below.

In the lower apartment of the castle sat three persons. It was not really cold, but yet the air was damp and chilly, and the fire on the hearth crackle, and a logs five was blazing away in the wide capacious fireplace. Near to this sat the two girls. The eldest had seen twenty years of life, and each year, as it had passed over her head, had left its golden impress upon her beauty. Her form was light and graceful, airy as the fabled beast, and possessing the perfection of beauty than an ardent imagination would give to a fairy. Her head was full of luxuriant tresses of the hair dark-brown hair, and hazel eyes; but when the rays of the sun fell upon the head, the golden tresses took a golden hue, showing that the extreme fineness and gloss of the hair made it look darker than it really was. Such was Gertrude, or Ruth, the only sister of the Count Rudolf. Her features plainly showed that the noble blood of nature were the legitimate tenants there; but at the present time there was a cloud upon her face and a sort of melancholy overshadowed her beautiful countenance.

Close by her distance, and so near that one arm rested upon her shoulder, sat the bright and envied Blanche of Wartemberg. She was about twenty years of age, smaller even than Constance, and more light and airy in appearance. She was more delicate in her features than her sister, and her large, sparkling eyes were of a deep, dark hue. Wine she smiled the while she spoke, and the joyous emotion seemed to bring her very soul to her eyes. She loved to smile, for such a nature was one of joyousness and satisfaction, and everything like ill-feeling she drove from her as soon as possible. She was the daughter of the Wild Knight, and was as the "apple of his eye," for he "kept her as the apple of his eye." She was ready to sacrifice everything on earth save his honor with his child. He knew that she was, he would not have turned from a path once entered upon. He loved her because she was worthy of being loved, and for because she was the child and feature of the woman who gave her birth—the woman whom he had loved with his whole soul—the first and only thing he had ever loved with his whole soul. And he loved her as he reached the centre of manhood.

The third person in the room was Rudolph von Wartemberg, *The Wild Knight*. This subject he had long borne, and no man ever bore it more deservedly. He was a man of *the iron will*, *of the head of God—the lord of all mankind*!—and it gave a bold story of his character. The Knight of Wartemberg if I can help it, but I fear not Rudolf of Baden."

The crusader's words were so easily and frankly spoken, and his manner was so calm and assured, that Agnes's fears were lulled, and the two kept up conversation flowed joyously and freely.

And the Unknown was the knight of deep, dark villainy of which his newly made enemies were capable, he might not have felt so perfectly assured. But all ignorant of the danger that hovered for a more careful watch than he now deemed necessary. In his way of honor he could not have conceive of such meanness as characterized some of the knights of Germany. He did not fully realize the bad ends that develop the ingenital throne. Had he known that those who sat in the highest places of the empire were those who held the basest of government and administered the affairs of the great nation—even the emperor himself—he, he might not have wondered that the spirit had crept up into the towns and castles. And perhaps there will that he did not know it, for he was comparatively happy now, as he surely could not have been with all the knowledge upon his soul.

CHAPTER VI.

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"Because he showed it when he said she was foolish."

"O—I take the fault," cried Everhard, with a laugh. "I knew you aimed it at me. Then," he added, turning again towards Constance of Baden, "what a power of influence this young maid has to be sure, to suppose that the fellow holds any remembrance of you. Here he has been gone three days, and you have not heard of him."

"Only eight years, sir," interrupted Constance, with more than her very usual spirit.

"You keep an account of time most accurately, pretty lady," said Everhard, with a sneer. "Of course. But let it be eight years—eight years this very month—and even so! then you were but little years of age when he went away, and he must have been two or three-and-twenty at least.

"Good, sir!"

"Ah—you know, of course."

"I do, sir."

"Very well. And now only think of it: Because he used to laugh and play with you; because you happened to be children together under the same roof; and because in the fun and frolic of childhood you chanced to take up for each other, suppose for even a moment that he remembers it now? Suppose that he has love with a score of Orient beauties ere this?"

"Stop, Sir Count. You have no right to malign that man whom you do not know."

"Pooh! It's the nature of man."

"Then, by my faith, sir, the Engelbert von Marburg is not like other men."

"Perhaps he is not, but all probability he was dead long ago. These crusades are not very conducive to longevity."

"Sir, you are cruel to me."

"There, Constance—that will do. You are little to be blame for the not you, and if there was not a tell-tale fool there then I cannot see."

"Ah—think you the lady loves me?"

"Has she any reason so to do? In years past she has shown you favor, and now she is kind to you."

"Yes—when I left her she promised me that she would be my wife. Of course I could not think of holding her by such a promise, but yet her words have never been absent from my mind. Though for three years of my sojourn in a distant clime I have prayed to God that I might return and find her true to her promise. Now I have her hand upon me. Oh! is she beautiful?"

"Beautiful, indeed. And now let me advise you. While you watched the fair girl with love, I watched her with the eye of a hawk. She is beautiful in nature so that she was not haughty. I noticed that whenever her eye rested upon Everhard, even though it were but for an instant, a perceptible shudder crept through her frame."

"How?——"

"Walk a moment. And I noticed that with Everhard regarded her with eager interest, her countenance became suddenly compress, and his hand spasmodically close as his gaze rested upon your person."

"And what of this?" asked Engelbert, eagerly, as he laid down his pen and blew the Wild Count Wartemberg was jealous of you."

"*Jealous of you!*" uttered Marburg, starting. "Sir, are you not dreaming?"

"But you do not think the Count—the father of the lady—would dare to entertain such an idea?"

"Why not? You know Agnes of Luxemburg is a lovely girl, and I should suppose that the high provision of her father's will which touches her marriage with the Count of Baden, he may be willful reason to give his sister's hand as a sort of *good will offering*."

"I am sure it is so; and now let me advise with you. Let me remember as soon as you can. Let me her feelings towards you—confuse all—and then come to me. Ask me no more questions; but do as I bid you."

CHAPTER VII.

GATHERING FOR A STORM.

Upon the highest tower of the castle there was a peculiar contrivance for discovering the foe in the night by the stars; and when the watchman there struck the hour of midnight, the count Knight Rudolf was just getting to sat in the upper room next where we first found him. His arms were thrown back upon his head, and his face was bowed.

"Is my soul," he uttered to himself, "I cannot afford to give her up. The time is coming when I must have power. Rudolf of Hapsburg, who would be emperor, is a fool, or he never would have made the imperial crown, means to turn upon his old associates and drive them from the throne. I know that such is his plan. But if I can unite the house of Baden to my interest, I may yet thwart his deep laid plot. I believe I love that girl, and I gentle girl, too. I never knew that I really loved her until I knew that she could be false. Yet, in my stance loves him. I am sure of that. Why did he leave me just here? But I think I was in a place for him outside of the maiden's chamber. Well! so it is.

He had made several turns across the apartment after this, when he was startled by hearing a quick, sharp knock upon the outside of the outer gate.

"Ha?" he cried, "that blast was from one who is used to the horn. It may be Rudolf. —Ah—must he not have met these Crusaders? What's that? Ho, there! Ho!" he cried, as he rushed to the door.

"My lord, the Count of Baden, Sir Otto von Metzingen, and Sir Marco Mentani have come; and they bring with them two dead bodies!"

"How? Dead men, say you?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Bring them up and show them up here."

"The dead men, my lord?"

"No, you fool! I mean the live knights, I mean."

The messenger withdrew, and ere long afterwards Rudolf of Baden, with his head bound up in a bloody cloth, and with his body wrapped up into an unseemly shape by pain, and the Italian Mordard, entered the apartment.

"How now, Rudolf?" cried the host, in astonishment.

"Has the lady Agnes come?" asked Baden, without seeming to heed the question.

"She has."

"And who came with her?"

"Sir Engelbert of Marburg, and that popular hero of the Black Eagle."

"Are they here now?"

"They are."

"Where?"

"Why—in their chamber, to be sure."

"Tell me where! Tell me, Everhard!"

"But why, Rudolf? Answer me that first."

"Why! Oh! show them to me! Show me that Black Unknown—and you shall have one the best in the land to the marriage! Show me where they are!"

"In plain, Rudolf!"

"Ask me I not plain? By Saint Paul, you that I see what I mean if you will but show me where they sleep! Come—be not bedeyed with me!"

"Plainly, then—you mean to kill the knight?"

"Yes!"

"To murder him in his sleep?"

"If you will have it so. I mean to have my revenge!" Show me the way!"

"Aye, good Everhard," joined in Sir Otto, "show him the way. Oh! O! O! O-o-o-o! The black villain has well nigh taken the life from me!"

"Gentlemen," said Everhard of Wartemberg, standing erect and looking from one to the other, "I would you know me better. Though a man had slain my own child, he should not be murdered in his sleep! But explain. What is it?"

Rudolf of Baden knew the Wild Knight well enough to know that he would never sit that he said, and that no power on earth could move him. So he took a seat, and as soon as he could gain his breath he said,

"Listen, sir, and you shall hear. I was on my way to the convent after Agnes, when, at the little plain of Wayburn, I met the lady in the charge of Sir Engelbert and his companion, with their two squires. I told him—the Unknown—that I would relieve him of his charge; but he told me I then demanded her. He refused. I explained my claim. But he refused still. Just then Sir Otto and Sir Marco came. They had had a brush with the Black Eagle in the morning. He and Sir John of Mentani were together, and I told the knight then if he did not give the maiden up I should have to fight him. He placed himself on his guard—he and his companion—while they gave Agnes in charge to their squires. We attacked them——"

"How many of you?"

"Five of us. My good Knight of Bondorf and Sir John of Mentani, Mordard, my squire, and I; and they would have killed us could they have had it. But we had the best of the fight."

"Then, by my soul, they are two brave knights; and—perhaps, dangerous ones. But no more of that. Rudolf. If you have done as you assume, you must find some other way. But did you know the Black Knight's face?"

"No. Did you?"

"Yes."

"And who is he? What is he?"

"There I am as ignorant as yourself, save that I have seen his countenance, and no more. It is a marked face, and a handsome one, and not such as to lead one to suspect the mission of its owner."

"But the other knight—Engelbert von Marburg, is he the same? He had had a brush with an assault at Heidelberg, when Constance was there with her uncle?"

"He is the same."

"And I wonder if he remembers my sister? Does he know her?"

"Yes," whispered Everhard, trying to conceal his emotion.

"Ha! And did you see anything?"

"Never mind."

"But there may be something to mind. I want to impress upon your mind the very simple fact that this gentleman is one of mine has a powerful will of her own; and if she takes a notion to love this fellow, and he tells her that he loves her, and finds her a very Xantippe to manage."

"There is something in that," said the host, half musing.

"Aye,—and there's one more thing: If this Black Knight will enforce upon her the love of Landolf, I am much mistaken. Did you notice anything of the kind?"

"Did I?" uttered Everhard, starting. During the few hours he spent in the knight's presence, he had not been with them, he had been too much engaged in looking after Constance, to notice him so soon as you can. I have come to reflect he remembered some passages between Agnes and the Unknown, but I paid no heed to it then. And then he remembered, when Agnes went away for the night, that the Crusader held her by the hand only as a friend.

"By the holy rood!" he continued, bringing his hand down upon the table with force, "he—she loves him, I know; and so does he love her! There must be a sweet deal of love in that, for he is—"

"Then show me the way to the chamber where they sleep. Remember—two slight, simple blows will end the work, and I will be satisfied."

"No, no, Rudolf,—not so. Oh! I would not do such to save my own life! Not to the lord of Wartemberg. He was then known only as the *Young Duke*," from the fact that he was a page of the stout Duke of Suabia.

"Is he young now?" asked Rudolf, with interest.

"Yes—just in the very morning of prime manhood. He is not a year over twenty-five, I take my guess."

"About thirty," murmured Baden to himself, "and he has loved twenty years that his love could not be seen. "Ah—" he added, with a relieved look, "then he is not the man to be moved by any will of bearing, some fourteen or fifteen years ago, of his wife, claimed to make a match with the young those who had the power to promote him."

"I think it more than possible that you are right," said Everhard.

"And he is also his name for effect," resumed the host, following up the new train that perhaps will give a man more consequence than bravery, when coupled with a plebeian name."

"Then you have not known him?" said Everhard.

"Very well. There let them remain. And now let's to bed."

Without further remark of any consequence, the company separated, and ere long the Wild Knight was once more alone.

"By my knightly oath," he muttered to himself, "this is bad. We cannot afford to break up the arrangements. Engelbert must not encounter Constance and Agnes both turned from their paths! Oh, no—that will never do—never. Those are two knaves I know—there is no mistake about that; but that is no reason why we should sacrifice our very lives to their wishes. Oh, no, no—never."

With the remark, accompanied by an emphatic clap of his hands, the knight passed out into the hall of his; half a dozen menat-arms were engaged in drawing lots for a small pile of gold he mirror. Everhard informed them that the castle was now

under their charge, and then passed on. His own chamber was directly under the great tower, and connected with all the corridors on that floor. It was a high-vaulted apartment, with wainscoting of dark, elaborately carved oak, and a floor of stone. There were four windows—two looking to the northward, and two to the westward—commanding a view of all the passes of the range, for some miles, and also of the deep vale between the castle and the main mountain.

The Black Knight and his friend had been placed in a chamber on the same floor, and in the opposite angle of the structure. It was the room which had once been used by the ancient lords, and was now sometimes given to worthy guests, in accordance with a wish expressed by her. When she knew she must die, she called her husband to her, and asked him if he should use that apartment for himself if she left him, and upon his answering in the negative, she begged of him to keep it for the use of worthy warriors, adding that he should never turn an applicant away while that apartment was vacant.

The host had thrown off his doublet, and was upon the point of sitting down to remove his boots, when he was sure he heard footsteps upon the large stairway. He moved softly to the door, and leaning upon it, he looked out. To his surprise, it was one of the guard on his way to the tower, and he returned to his chamber, and sat down, although he was buried in profound slumber.

The two crusaders awoke with the sun, and as soon as they had performed their morning ablutions, they walked forth into the wide court. None of the household were yet astir, save the regular sentinels, as our two companions found nothing to restrict their progress. The view from the wall was grand and sublime in the extreme. On one hand rose the towering, craggy peaks of the mountain, with the ruins of the morning gradually rising away from their jagged brows. On the south, stretched away a deep, dark ravine, reaching towards Durnam and Mouldroon; on the east was the sea, shining like a sheet of silver, and turrent made its way, with rocks and forests breaking up the scene; while to the north, was a continuation of just such huge rocks as that upon which the castle was built, and away in the distance, almost as far as the eye could reach, could be seen the grey turrets of the castle of Mcintingo.

The girls were not far behind the two knights in seeking the sweet breath of the morning, and while the latter were returning from the stable, where they had been to see that their horses fared, they saw the maidens upon the western wall, they having just emerged from a door of the dwelling to which upon the other side they were not able to possible the two knights joined them, and the salutations were free and joyous. They remained a while, and then upon the plea that she must look after the meal, the lady left them. She had left enough to see that they were in a mood for some particular conversation, and that she would make an odd one in the meeting.

The conversation of Agnes and the Unknown was upon the scene by which they were surrounded, with an occasional interpolation of a passage or stance and manner. They did not seem to be able to the subject of their adventure of the day before, nor to the principal actors therein, though they might have done so had they known that those actors were even then in the castle.

In the meantime Constance and Adelbert had wandered away towards the gate around back of the barracks.

"Lady," spoke the brave knight, after the conversation upon other matters had become dull, "you must pardon me if I am bold. But our form of intimacy has come may be short, and ere I leave you, I would ask of a vestige which has been present with me for years. You cannot have forgotten the day of our parting. Do you remember, most surely, those bright, joyous hours, when the thoughts of our souls flowed freely, and we plaited the future in hope's brightest colors. I can never forget them. The words I spoke then, I could speak now. If you remember them, you have only served to give deeper root to the—the love which you bore me. I love you, I love you. And now will you not tell me how those words your own heart in this matter? I will speak plainly, for my happiness demands it."

Constance of Baden gazed down upon the hard rock, and nothing pondered as to the reasons she raised her eyes to her companion's face, and while a rich glow of blushed her pleasant brow, she said—

"I have not forgotten those scenes. I was a child then, but my love was not a child's love. If I made a promise then, I could not break it now. I have been weighed and measured, I still hold firmly to the faith of your love. I could not help it; something told me you would be true to me."

"Aye—and I have been, Constance. Oh! thy sweet image has been with me, and I have thought that then, too, would'st be true, he served as he many a conflict, for it should not be said that the man who bore the rich boon of the love of Constance von Baden, was a coward, or a recreant knight. Does remember its token, lady?"

As the knight thus spoke, he threw open the bosom of his purple doublet, and displayed a piece of blue ribbon suspended about his neck, from which hung a small golden cross. The eyes of the maiden beamed more brightly as she saw it, and a joyous look overspread her face.

"Does remember the words you spoke when you threw this over my head and bade me keep it?"

"Yes, I remember, to a line, almost, while, I remember them well."

"And the—the—When you come home, show me this, and I shall know our love is unbroken; and it shall be a pledge from me to thee, that I will be always true to you."

"Then may I not claim the fulfilment of the pledge?"

With a quick, generous movement, the maiden placed her hand within that of her companion, and without hesitation she said—

"All which my power I will do. In soul and heart I am thine forever."

"And that—is not that mine, too?"

"Oh! it must be. They would make me wed with the Knight of Wartemburg."

"Who would do it?"

"My brother."

"He cannot."

"But he is my guardian. I am under his control in all matters of business, and he claims the right even to dispose of my hand."

"He cannot—he shall not do it."

"I know he cannot make me wed; but he has the power to forbid it. Against his command I could not contract a legal marriage."

"And think you he would forbid your marrying with me?"

"I think he would. At all events, he has taken an oath to that effect."

The knight was troubled. For some moments he gazed away into the deep gorge without speaking. But suddenly a new light broke over his features, and in a hopeful tone he said,—

"My friend has promised to help me in this."

"He?—The Black Knight?"

"Yes."

"I have been his own constant companion for six years."

"Then tell me who he is."

"Ah—you ask me now a riddle beyond my power to solve. I never heard his name, nor do I know from what part of Germany he came."

"Oh—he must have come from this part, for I know him well. I know him when I see the face—how can he help you? What power can he wield?"

"I know not, Constance; only I am sure he would never give a hope if he had not, and means to do what he proposed. He is a noble-hearted man; a generous and true friend, and a safe guide in the hour of danger."

"But why does he abroad himself in this mystery?"

"I do not know. Only this I know: He will not reveal thy evil much longer."

Constance was upon the point of replying, when her companion gave a sudden start, and she felt his hand tremble.

"Ha?! he uttered. "Look! is not that the coming your brother?"

"It is!" the maiden returned, trembling in every limb.

"And see—he looks this way. He is angry."

"Let us go in. I would not have him see us."

Engelbert made no reply, but offering his arm, he started on, and soon gained the great hall, where Agnes and her companion had just arrived.

CHAPTER VIII

HALDOUN.

As the Unknown Crusader entered the great hall of the castle in the mid Sir Everhard, just coming in from the rear court. Although he was the younger Rudolf of Baden came in by another door from the balcony. The Black Knight was seated on a high-backed easy chair, and his head was thrown back, and his eyes closed in profound slumber. He was

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MATTERS OF TASTE.

The Ledger circulates largely among those who have homes of their own. It reaches the sturdy honest farmer, happy and independent in the midst of his harvests, and orchards, and flocks and herds; it reaches the strong-handed and frank-hearted mechanic and mason, the enterprising merchant and trader, and the professional man. All these, as we hope and wish for them, have homes of their own. Therefore we wish to say a word on matters of taste. We wish, perhaps, before all else, to see matters of essential profit and enjoyment.

If one of our readers were passing through a village street, or over a mountain highway, and saw on the one side a cottage, wreathed with vines and flowers, and surrounded by trees and shrubs in pleasant shade and fruit trees, and on the other side no garden, even a better cottage, devoid of all those external natural graces, which would his judgment, his sympathies, and his reason the most forcibly incline him to? Which would that fine cabin, in the midst of a flowery garden, would be chosen before even a palace in a barren waste? Yes, and he would, if he were a man of taste and sense, even be best on refusing purchasing a home, were the vines and blossoms, the shade and the fruit-trees in the balance of interests or his life, and they would overbear such a load and show of more interests.

Now, how cheap, easy and simple a thing it would be, especially in villages, and in the country, where ground space is abundant, to have every home decked with vines and flowers, and all the elegancies and luxuries of nature known in garden and lawn. All that is required is a little care, a little patience, and a little time. Some taste is, to be sure, requisite, but we shall not suppose we err by supposing one of them to lack taste in such a matter. Apart from the delight and solid enjoyment these decorations afford to the cultivating lover of the beautiful, they are a source of very casual asset-by, compelling the native we so much covet in the world, when all else we may have offers no attraction nor theme for our regard.

But the value of grounds thus ornamented, for use as well as for beauty, is very much enhanced, does not stop here. All these adornments, pleading to soul and sense, have a money-value in the market. More and more is it becoming a fact, that the farmer can sell his ornamented grounds for hundreds and thousands more than they would otherwise command. Barrenness around the homestead is like coming to be ridiculed and refused to be rented by persons of good taste and sense. We could instance more than one case where thousands of care (not annoying or expensive) and taste, have added ten thousand dollars to the value of fifty or an hundred—or even two acres of ground. And the addition consisted chiefly in fruit-trees, shade-trees, shrubbery and flowers. All these can be compassed with a little pains by the poorest man who owns a plot of ground. And no one man who does not idly or viciously waste more hours and days than would add all this beauty and value to his home.

We would, however, commend this subject to serious thought, for higher reasons than money and measure. Is there nothing precious in the beautiful and magnificent, whether they relate to man or not? Is not the enhancement of home-pleasure the great thing, after all—and what more renders home attractive and delightful than the surrounding of it with forms of beauty; with that which exalts, while it charms, the mind and the senses? The farm-house, the mechanic's cottage, and the merchant's villa, are alike made more pleasant and desirable, invested as we have pictured. We hope and believe, that the last year just suggestions may cause more than one tree, and vine, and shrub to be added to the earth's rich and beautiful garnishing. If so, we shall be repaid.

FASHION.

Some one says "Commerce is King." Not so—*fashion is King*. Fashion is king everywhere; from politics and palaces down to the circumference of a hoop, and the number of flounces on a woman's gown. Trade, commerce, agriculture, mechanic art, and literature, are all conducted after a fashion. A man is clad from head to foot after a fashion. Public opinion is a thing of fashion, and the grandest gets his crowded and rich congregations from fashion. No matter what subject we take up, exactly, everything must have a degree of fashion. "To be out of fashion is to be out of the world," is no joke. It is just what half the world believes, and the principle they act upon. The fancy, fine or botanical—cattle, dogs, or the pomological, is no more a division of fashion, in his sphere, than is the plain-coat Quaker in his. The same laws, the frills, and farthenes of each and all are governed, "to a dot," by the principle of fashion. Religion has examples and imitators. Fashion is a most important ruler; and the subject to get justice from a Court or Common Council, should secure service from a physician, and straightforward, honest advice from a lawyer, will be to make justice, truth and honesty fashionable.

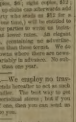
PAID ONCE.

Post-Office Stamps.—We are overrun, willing, un, and involuntary stamps, and we receive any sort of them for subscriptions to the Ledger. We do not object to taking a few dead and stamps occasionally; no more change; although we look upon them as a nuisance, as it is difficult to sell them. It is a nuisance also that the Post-office will buy or redeem stamps of any kind. We will not even receive of the most obscure sheep! Who will sustain these laws's dodge?

AN AGGRIEVED SPIRIT.

Who, of our readers, that has lived to man's or woman's estate, that has not had superabounding proof that the "blundering cuss" has been in such a most accursed spirit? Where is the hamlet, the village, or the city that has not borne witness to the desolation? War has not taken so many lives, nor exhausted so many treasuries nor brought so fearful widowhood and orphanage, and misery, and misery, and misery. Families and positions have been feeble by its dicta.

Look into you home! what pale, haggard form of woman is that, shrinking in her rags, with chil-



dren, blanch-faced and starving, clinging around her, and from what strokes she? Oh! can it be that she was young and beautiful, well-beloved and happy, when, by the dawning summer of life, she gave her heart, her hand, her all, to one who vowed a fierce, cherish, and protect her? Yes, and he she now like our own happy sisters and daughters? Aye! even so. And for a season, young joy and plenty, went with her into a new home. Children budded and blossomed around her, awakening new and increasing love in her heart, with them to her unbroken. And a manly heart beat to hers, and a manly, strong hand was her stay and support. How much of Heaven might sometimes be such a circle of souls, knit and bound together by every holy tie.

But intoxication came! black, leprous, soulkilling and appalling as the plague, was the fiend sworn at the marriage altar. Down into his heart it fastened, and into his brain and blood, and he reeled from the circle of home, only to return a poor degraded creature. Poverty came and crowded, shivering, by the hearth-side all-hood was blasted, and shame and grief filled a home that was once bright. Oh! how sad that dar at the bare thought of such an end!

PRIDE OF DRESS.

We are not among those croakers who are constantly bewailing the tendency to luxury in respect to stevens in materials of dress, complained of as characteristic of our age. We do not see that when pecuniary ability justifies the cost, we admire rich broadcloths, and silks, and fars, and such too as give evidence of a high degree of skill in the making, calling for large pay to the tailor, the dressmaker, and the furrier. The comparative varying form and fashion of articles of dress, which is also a necessity, is not to be found fault quite another question. So does the absorption of thought and feeling—the complete monopolization of them, we might say, which the wearing of rich apparel is apt to produce on certain circles. *It* indicates that the feelings reside in their more external expression—in other and more peculiar phrase, are proud of their dress.

This is a pitiable weakness. As such it cannot be too frequently condemned. It has been severely rebuked, likewise, in every age, which is but little success. The fable of the sheep clothed in a golden fleece, mistaking the admiration of the crowd as attracted by itself, instead of its artificial covering, was an arrow of ridicule well pointed and aimed.

Would that the weak-minded victims of fashion, referred to, could see the face of the multitude. It must be brought to the conviction that it is their fine clothes, rather than themselves, that excite and draw the attention which they receive! If they *look* well, they would then see the need of greater attention to the development of all that constitutes true selfhood. Individual culture of intellect and heart and character would then be the study of the day, instead of the present.

Is it possible that the well-educated children of fashion, who have been taught the fallacy of the principle, can be satisfied with the mere show of dress, blanch-faced and starving, clinging around her, and from what strokes she? Oh! can it be that she was young and beautiful, well-beloved and happy, when, by the dawning summer of life, she gave her heart, her hand, her all, to one who vowed a fierce, cherish, and protect her? Yes, and he she now like our own happy sisters and daughters? Aye! even so. And for a season, young joy and plenty, went with her into a new home. Children budded and blossomed around her, awakening new and increasing love in her heart, with them to her unbroken. And a manly heart beat to hers, and a manly, strong hand was her stay and support. How much of Heaven might sometimes be such a circle of souls, knit and bound together by every holy tie.

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FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

GIRLS' BOARDING SCHOOLS

Had I twenty daughters, which I regret to say I have not, not one of them should ever enter a "boarding-school." (I beg pardon for the slang phrase, which I have exploded; every two-year-older learns his A B C now at an "Institute," and every "boarding-school" now-a-days may consist of a ten-feet-square basement room.) But I digress.

To every mother who is contemplating sending her daughter to a boarding-school I would say: Let neither your vanity nor the unspoken voice of fashion, nor high-sounding circulars, induce you to remove her from under your own personal care and supervision, at a time when the physique of the future wife and mother requires a frequent watchfulness on your part, which no Institute ever has—ever will supply. This is a point which I am astonished that parents seem so utterly to overlook. Every mother knows how fatal wet feet, or insufficient clothing are to the health of a child of critical age, at which they are generally sent away to school. If it is not the case, how pale, sunken, rubbers, thick-soled shoes, and flannels, in the truth which bears the little exile company; they will not insure her from many vexatious ills to encounter that you say to her, "My dear, be careful of your choice of companions." Choose for her those with whom her bed-fellow, and room-mates—the latter often three in a room—are to associate in school and the railroads send; for what teacher, with the best intentions, ever gives this subject the attention which it deserves? Not one in a hundred, I venture to say, has that distant honor of her pupils' confidence which is necessary to the successful limits of fashion; that a carriage with liveried servants, bearing lifted on Republican soil, stands daily before their door; that the dresses of those room-mates are made in the latest style, and of the richest, when, by the dawning summer of life, she gave her heart, her hand, her all, to one who vowed a fierce, cherish, and protect her? Yes, and he she now like our own happy sisters and daughters? Aye! even so. And for a season, young joy and plenty, went with her into a new home. Children budded and blossomed around her, awakening new and increasing love in her heart, with them to her unbroken. And a manly heart beat to hers, and a manly, strong hand was her stay and support. How much of Heaven might sometimes be such a circle of souls, knit and bound together by every holy tie.

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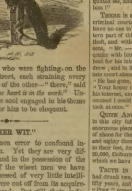
* In a formal, hollow walk, in a half mile-procession, to answer the purpose of carrying by young, grieving girls clothes, which have been worn only once or twice, and carried at night into insufficient sleeping rooms!—from which they are taken in the morning, so far as my observations extends, formals are insanity.

MIS-ALLIANCES.

The late marriage of Miss Bolter to her father's coachman has given rise to much adverse criticism as to the propriety of the alliance. Marriages in defiance of the laws of caste, and against the fact "human mind is made," are always unhappy ones. It is not sufficient to say that this is a free country, and everybody has a right to live in the circle of honor institutions and philosophies, God has created with the diversity in the diverse nature of our great brotherhood. If nothing but obedure origin or poverty could be urged against a man, we should say he has a right to love and to wed with the noblest if he can win her above obscurity and poor fortune; but the question is, Is there a fair mental likeness? to be considered in all human relations, and we think that the most unhappy of marriages are in the acute of moral and intellectual inequality—there is an eternal unfitness. We take it for granted that Miss Bolter is a lady in mind and manners; but intelligence, accomplished and properly educated woman, and finished in the best of modern manner, succeed to the hand of such a woman, every one would say that she had made a mis-alliance, and was destined to produce more evil than good. It is a violation of the moral laws of our being—laws which is not so much the creation of society as it is the rule of our common instincts. Such matches do not made in heaven, and may be overlooked by court, but are a breach of the divine and social organization of nature. We think the fair daughter of Miss Bolter acted unwisely in embowering to another the marriage of his daughter with Dean, after the nuptial ceremony had been performed, and she was a friend of ours—when living—she would have spoke a good word for the Lizzons—and now that he is "at more," and his widow continues to publish the paper, we wish to benefit his family; hence the gratuitous insertion of the advertisement of the New York Phœnixe this week. The Phœnixe is the best paper of its kind, that has ever been started in this country. Among its contributors are the celebrated Doesticks, the Triangle, and other well-known writers. If you wish to subscribe, confine a dollar bill in a letter, and address it to the Phœnixe-office, 114 Nassau street, New York.



pointing to two men who were fighting—on the opposite side of the street, each straining every nerve to get the better of the other—"there," said he, "is a case of mis-alliance." And so it is. The less a man has his whole soul engaged in his theme the more he is apt to be beaten.

MOTHER WIT.

It is a sot uncommon ever to confound intelligence with cunning. Every day we may see, street, though often found in the possession of the former. Some of the wisest men in the world ever known were possessed of very little intelligence. Some of them were cut off from its acquisition by want of sympathy to read. But still more frequent, in the affairs of every-day life, was we to see the want of this very essential quality of education. It might have been said of them, that they had more wisdom in their little fingers than many others had in their whole bodies. They possessed a mother wit, which was "common-sense." It had its origin in careful observations of facts, and from passionate comparisons of and deductions from them.

One of the poets recognizes the distinction we have been insisting on, when he tells us that—

"Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oftimes no connexion."

Wisdom and intelligence should go together. But, where they go alone, wisdom has greatly the advantage. It has not another name for that "*mother wit*" which is the wise man's birthright.

MARRIAGE

The well ordered, happy family, must ever be a noble, though lesser, type of the most perfect and prosperous commonwealths and states. The laws which rule so easily and harmoniously, in that little circle, are the effusions of that prayer love and care for the well-being of all its members which should be the paramount spirit in all legislation and government. And the best development of the family, depends largely upon the tender and confiding unity of its head—upon their being ever impressed with the awful sacredness of that marriage relation, which not only "joins two loving hearts," but which devolved on the possessors of them the most responsible power over the "issues of life,"—and therewith, a responsibility no longer limited to their individual selves. Civilization has not, perhaps, accomplished more where the political institute of marriage has been most respected. There the affections and the moralities have exhibited their best developments, and sexuality—as in no other range of society—has failed of power to creep in—making of man, a brute, and of woman, a play-thing and slave.

Let but the Christian institution of marriage be universally practised and respected, and women will have achieved a possession of rights and power, such as more legal statutes can never confer. No philosophic observer can fail of feeling, regretfully, that, even in our own country—the fairest in *Christendom*—marriage is not invested with that sacredness which it should be in the sight of heaven. Its foundations, as a social institution, are not a few, who build his obligations light, and scoff at the idea of its being essential to sound and healthful society. The broad margin of liberty and power—through divorce—given by the lawmakers of all the states to the marriage covenant, is a most conclusive proof that the institution has not the influence and sanctity it deserves.

Every divorce, decreed for other than the most palpable and positive reasons, is a blow at the heart of society—a wound in its most tender and vital part. Too little efforts are made professedly to further facilitate divorcement, and it is a sad thing to say, that woman's voice is not unheard in these appeals—the best down and bulwark of the family and the state. *Divorce*—is a word that should be considered wicked and baleful. Every individual, woman, should frown upon every plea and request for it. Her safety and her proper consideration are bound up in that "holiest of relations," and for the little that she may suffer, undivorced, she gains the pain and safety in the state, by its aiding steadily and sternly upon the sacredness of marriage—and to bring a host, which, even under rare and extreme circumstances, death alone can conquer.

It is not our purpose to discuss the many evils and miseries flowing from a lax public sentiment on this subject—observations and reasons will have traced these among their reflections on the importance of marriage. Our object is to utter our protest in favor of the extremest sacredness of the marriage institution, and against adding to the already too numerous facilities for divorce. We would have marriage revered in the family, and by the state, made a matter of the most solemn public record, as well as private personal concern. The facts which tragedy has developed—a case, which, of itself, should prompt our legislators to more solemn and considerate enactments.—Marriage! the most vital of domestic and moral institutions.

THE SECRET OF ELOQUENCE.

If the mind be full—if there be real matter within—if the feelings are glowing for utterance, a man's speech is likely to have a pith, directness, and force, otherwise extremely hard of attainment. Dr. McCartee, a venerable pastor of Philadelphia church, in Twenty-second street, related an anecdote last Sabbath morning, illustrative of this. He stated that when a young man, he acted as assistant clergyman to Bishop White, of Philadelphia. "Eloquence," exclaimed the distinguished divine, who was sitting close to the speaker's desk, now, quick! and I'll show you what eloquence is," and

CURRENT ITEMS.

In Thibodeaux Parish (La.) Miss Marie Laroche, a young lady, who was formerly a slave, being kept by her father's estate, recently found a fortune bellowing behind her. On hearing to see whereof it came, she discovered a large Dewsiture boil pawing the ground and shaking his head at her, as though about to rush upon and destroy her. He was not more than twenty rods distant, and it was at that time that the Mississippi River. Without delay she attempted girl fled, and the Dewsiture at once gave chase. It was a race for life, and the infuriated animal rapidly gained upon the fugitive. Believing her destruction inevitable, the poor girl fainted, and fell to the ground. At that moment a company of plantation hands came in sight, and their shouts and cries of encouragement soon reassured the half-dead but intended victim, and carried her safely home, where she was soon restored to consciousness.

A poor laborer, in Newburgh, recently found a pocket-book containing seventeen dollars, and set out to seek about finding the owner, when he was discovered in the act by a man who claimed the money as his own. The man to whom the money belonged accused the poor man of having stolen five dollars of it, which the latter denied with indignation. On again counting the money, it was found to be all right; and then the New-Yorker asked the poor man who had rescued to him his lost property. *Some glass of beer with him as a reward!*

The last news from the French in Algeria comprises an account of a great fire here, by a company of officers and soldiers, and also of a terrible fire at Oran, considering the cattle-pens of the latter for some months, hence the loss of the animals. Several persons have also been burned and smoked; and he attacked bark again, hitting Fort Arzeu, and several occupying quartering the fire. The one private soldier; but he was at last slain, and his carcass consigned to the ground with the others.

There seems to be most horrible destitution among the Cretan refugees in Athens. Among the grand rhetorical flourishes of the Emperor about "peace and prosperity" in Crete, he might have mentioned the fact of a poor family in that city, consisting of a widowed mother and her children, who, after a most severe and the youngest (an infant child) when perished from starvation, in a miserable hut, and the survivors were found in a state of utter destitution.

The British Government have instructed their consuls in the Levant to inform the Turkish officials that the mere entry and searching towards the government, and that the Porte will be held responsible for the safety and protection of certain friendship between the two nations. Verily, the Sick Man's physician is becoming a terror of evil consequence in the councilors of the Old World.

The Paris correspondent of the Philadelphia Afflicting statements in regard to the condition of some of the wounded Communists. He says that a number of them have been ruined by dense friends and swollen and impassable rivers and roads, and that, if ignored in the midst of a world's fair, dense, are reported as suffering all the horrors of frontier warfare, hunger and disease.

Owing to the difficulties between China and Japan, the exportation of tea from the former country are closed against all foreigners, and consequently the supply of that article is almost entirely cut off. It is effecting a great advance in the price of that article; and serious fears are entertained that the "Celestial" will not open his ports to foreigners for some time to come, as he will be entirely destitute of our common beverage.

Mr. Bonner has been place in the hands of the Institute one of great practical and scientific talents to be known as "Bonner's Institute," and we trust that the most generous possible encouragements to enter his service and to make his home with us. Terms, &c., on application. Freedmans are now in his service, and the number of such will be largely increased hereafter.

In Hunterdon County (Va.) a poor shoemaker, named Hoffman, was, a short time since, on his way to make wax, and unluckily spitting some water in it, the latter immediately froze. He was then in the act of tasting of it, tasting the poor man in the face, burned off his nose and so disfigured him that his own children did not know him.

A man named Barney, living in San Francisco, has a wife who is remarkable for the ease with which she writes what is called spiritualism, recently committed suicide in consequence of the publication of a letter to the effect that he was going on a journey into the spirit-land, and would return soon.

A late number of the London Times has a paragraph in the form of a letter from Japan, in which the doings of the coroner, witnesses, doctors, reporters, and inquest-jurors are described in a manner the most comparing severely.

It is estimated that the whole amount of gold yielded by the mines of California and Australia is one hundred and seventy millions of dollars. If the same sum were coined into $20 pieces, it would make a column of double eagles reaching to the moon.

It is asserted by those who profess to know all about it, that the Emperor of Russia has a very large stock of growth well because stock-gambling in the country at least equal to ours.

In some townships in Iowa land is now worth $100 per acre, and in the more favored parts of the Western prize, namely, $1.25 an acre.

The expense of building and equipping one freshness man-of-war, is greater than that of maintaining all the paupers in the State of Massachusetts.

During the month of February no less than ten persons were killed in the streets of Constantinople of tramway.

A couple of brothers, named Hendrickson, recently killed a black bear, in the woods of northern Vermont, that weighed 324 lbs., when dressed.

WIT AND HUMOR.

Artist's Evidence.—A notorious thief was once arraigned for stealing a watch, and exposed to a commercial with an extensive gang, which were laying contributions on all parts of the country. The prisoner's counsel was hard put to him to reveal the names of his associates, but he was equal to the occasion. He declared that the watch was his own original, that he had made it himself, and described with the revealing, under oath, all the inner of his accomplices. He was acquitted, and immediately after leaving as a witness of "Not guilty;" when he was called upon for the promised information, he said he had made it all up. "But," the dumbfounded, "did the devil is the only accomplice I ever had; we have been at work together for twenty years, and have quitted me, and now you only hang him—if you can catch him."

There is a well-known custom prevailing in our criminal courts, of calling upon the prisoner's counsel before no one to defend them. On one occasion, in the Western part of the State, the trial of a man accused of theft, and witness counsel, and as a lawyer who was present to be called upon to defend him, was at once appointed to the office. He had no sooner taken his seat than he asked for his interest." The lawyer and his client then withdrew to a private room, and he received his fee and returned into court alone. "Where is the prisoner?" asked the court. "He has escaped," was the reply. "Escaped!" cried the court. "Your honor told me to give him the best advice I could for my money, and he has gone to look after it as well as he could."

Going to get to Albany and back to see my grand-son," said a respectable-looking but simple-dressed man to a friend, as he was about to take his seat in the cars. "Why, you are not going to Albany," replied the clerk, with a look and gesture of astonishment. "Yes, I am," said the man, "I have got a ticket, and I am going." "But I don't go, for I would not like to go away from home forever."

In a company of young people, the other day, at a party in this city, one of the girls said that the house had a "set" in their baggage. "Yes, Miss," demanded one of the company, with a mingled air of astonish and eminency, "we could shape on them until supper."

There is a rich man in this city, whom the Dungarians have tried to get the thousand of, but failed, as he is too sharp for the dunns.

Worshipful Institute.—A cat having lost her kittens followed a sudden pig man.

TO ALLEN.

BY ALICE CARY.

Once in the years now dead and gone—
In the stormy winter night—
We heard your clamber over and as fire
To make the damp wood light.

And when I kindled, and we could cease
The rafters by its glow,
We sat on the hearth in earnest talk—
Three of us in a row.

Little Jane with mouth as sweet,
And bright hair to her eyes,
Shrewd questions at our fireplace,
And thinking it was wise.

You, so sturdy of heart and limb,
Winning the wind and hail
Might drive away—but always after that looked
A bit with her eyes to and;

And I, for the time of darkness
Wishing, and grape-vine sayings,
And for lady-birds to come in at,
And snow on their spotted wings.

Ah, soon enough it came about,
The gentle years of want and hatred
Robbed a stay subject that looked
A bit with her eyes to and.

And fast enough the seasons came,
And made my children tall—
But a time like that when Lucy sat
On the hearth, looked at all.

I have not found, and cannot find,
An album in the world I go—
For we never can sit and talk again—
Three of us in a row.

THE ABDUCTED HEIRESS.

BY MRS. CAROLINE INGRAHAM,

AUTHOR OF "SADIE HARTLAND," "THE BRIDE OF THE HOUSE OF ODIN," ETC. ETC.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1867, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER XIV.

PURSUIT.

It is but seldom that punishment follows close upon the commission of a crime or folly. But in this case it seemed to do so. As the carriage that bore Justina away from all who loved her, rolled onward, the weight of memory pressed deeper and deeper on her heart. Her grave ill and wilful loss, and a strange coldness toward Saville seemed springing up in her heart. At the moment when she supposed him to be leaving her forever, she felt that she could meekly suffering, so that he might only remain near her. But now that the sacrifice was really made—now that she had leisure to think and reflect, in that long night journey, she saw, with dismay, that she could never love him as she had loved Alfred. She was bound in all honor, to become his wife, but the thought of a life spent with him, while she could never look on Alfred's face again, was inexpressibly bitter to her.

She shrank into a corner of the carriage, wrapped herself in her cloak, and feigned sleep, in order to escape all conversation with her companion. He did not speak, but seemed engrossed by his own thoughts. But he, also, regret the step he had taken? I cannot exactly call it regret, for he was not one to abandon a project once undertaken, but in his heart of hearts, he felt that it would have been better for both if they had never met. It was not the passion of a lover that he looked upon her—but since fate seemed against him, he never inwardly that he would make him, and win what she withheld.

The carriage post just breaking when the sound of horses' feet, and the momentary pausing of their carriage, roused them from their abstraction.

"What does the scoundrel mean by stopping?" said Saville; and letting down the window, he looked out.

"What—Saville!" cried a voice in an account of astonishment and pain.

"The devil! Drive on!" he cried to the postillion, and the horses sprang forward in a rapid trot, and left the speaker far behind.

"Who was it?" asked Justina.

"Colonel your lover."

"Your friend—the colonel! What could have brought him here? Are we pursued?"

"Scarcely," said Saville, with a sarcastic smile. "When a man pursues another, he does not generally meet him from the other side."

Justina was silent.

He took her hand, and drawing the heavy cloak away locked long and earnestly in her face, by the light of the carriage lamp.

"How pale and sad you look, Justina."

"I am ill."

"Is it possible that you regret what you have done, so soon? Justina, it is not too late. If you but say the word, I will take you back to once. Heaven knows I will take no unwilling bride to the altar."

"No—no. I cannot go home again, except as your wife," she said sadly. "It would break my mother's heart."

"You seem to have no thought of mine," he said bitterly.

She smiled and kissed him.

"Forgive me, Justina. If I had not loved you, I should not be here. But I am ill and wretched, and I hardly know what I am saying."

"You are indeed ill," he said, as he felt the hot breath that fanned his cheek. "I am not a monster, to urge you beyond your strength. We will stop at the next inn—it is but a mile or two from here—and you shall rest, before we go on."

"But do you not fear pursuit?"

"What have they of us, Justina?"

"You forget Colonel Saville."

He started and bit his lip.

"I did for a moment, little one. But never mind—you shall have rest, and I will guard it as tenderly as one guards a treasure. We are beyond the reach of pursuit now, and I will not allow you to be worn out by the haste which I myself have counseled."

He kissed her hand against his breast as she spoke, and tried to forget its aching throbs. He looked down at the pale and noble face with closed eyes, and was startled again by its fair resemblance to one he had loved in youth. And as he gazed, some sight of the past rose up before him, the faults, the follies, the sins of that reckless time. He seemed to himself like an evil spirit who had lost an angel notary, and he could only hide his eyes with his hand, and sigh to think that she, so young, so beautiful, and so pure, should be doomed to link her fate with his.

"There was another," he murmured, and then remorse became so torturing, that the sudden pause of the carriage before the wayside inn, and the hustle around him, was a blessed relief.

It was late in the afternoon before Justina awoke from the long and dreamless sleep into which she had fallen, as soon as she reached her apartment in the little inn. She lay for a moment, wondering to what strange place she had been brought. The bed, the room, the furniture, all were unfamiliar. But a regular military trend in the passage beyond, soon recalled her to herself and with a weary sigh, she rose, smoothed her dark hair, and resumed the hat and shawl, that were lying on the table, just as she had flung them down.

She opened the door, and went out into the hall. Saville was pacing to and fro, with his arms folded, and his head bent down upon his breast, but on seeing her, he came eagerly forward, and taking both her hands in his, asked how she felt.

"Better—much better," she replied.

"And are you able to resume the journey?"

She looked at him for a moment, and bowed her head in assent.

"The carriage waits at the door, with fresh horses," he said. "But before you go, you must take some refreshment."

He took her hand to lead her to the parlor, but she drew back.

"Saville—do not ask me. I am refreshed already by my long sleep."

He face darkened.

"You know, Justina, that among the Arabs no man will break bread, or partake of salt, with his enemy. Do you meditate treachery, that you refuse?"

"This is foolish, and childish," said the girl, drawing herself up with dignity. "I cannot eat—every morsel would choke me. But to show you I am no enemy, I will pledge you in a glass of wine."

He led her into the parlor, and poured out a glass for her. Strength and spirits seemed to return with the generous draught. She smiled with a touch of her old gaiety, as she put the goblet down.

COLONEL PAIN'S RECOGNITION OF GENERAL SAVILLE.

"And now—" he said inquiringly, as he caught her eye.

"Now I am ready. And as whatever is to be, may as well be done quickly, we will make no delay."

Saville's face lit up as if by magic.

"There spoke my own brave girl—the soldier's wife. Come, let me hand you to the carriage."

They went out together. The landlord stood upon the steps, whistling "God save the King," and Saville, after seeing Justina safely seated, turned, with his foot upon the step, and flung him a piece of gold.

"You remember? he said—"if any one follows us, we have taken another road."

The man scratched his head and looked puzzled.

"Well, what is it?" asked Saville impatiently. "Your honor will have to hurry, for I have much mistakers, they are following you now."

"What do you mean?"

"Step up here with me, sir, and look down into the valley."

He led him to a flight of ornamental steps, at the side of the house, and pointed down the road.

Far down at the top of the road, on a post-chaise, driven at its greatest speed, and rapidly nearing the inn.

"It is surely them!" said Saville, stamping impatiently. "What shall I do?"

"Do, sir! If I might offer my advice, sir," said the landlord, with a grin and a bow, "I should say, drive like John in the opposite direction, and put the ring on the finger of the lady, before they can catch you."

The General smiled, and placed another piece of gold in his broad palm.

"At all events, give them no fresh horses, and keep them here as long as you can."

"I'll do it, sir. Look ye with you!" and the good landlord danced with delight as the carriage rolled from the door.

But alas! for the ill-secreted couple. The horses provided at the inn were young and fresh, and but imperfectly trained. Their speed began to increase as they descended the hill, till it became terrific. Saville let down the window, and turned pale at the prospect before them. The horses were running madly down a steep descent. At the bottom, abruptly on a level road, and the frightened postillion was endeavoring, with shouts, shrieks, speeches and malediction. He sank back in his seat with a groan.

"Justina, my little delight, it is all over with us," he said sadly. "An almost certain death awaits us, but not to meet it together. I love you once more, and my you forgive me for bringing you to this!"

"I forgive you!—Oh, Saville, I have nothing to forgive," said Justina, who was calm and pale.

"Then let us pray to God together. After all, it will take away the bitterness of death, to taste it thus with you."

He clasped her closely to his breast, and bowed his head upon hers. In a moment more, all was the end. It came.

With a terrific crash, the carriage swung from one side to the other, as the bottom of the hill was reached, and then fell heavily upon the road. The frightened horses sprang away, with the postillion still clinging to the leader's back. Another carriage came dashing down the hill, in pursuit of Colonel Sair and Mrs. De Courcey sprang out among the crowd that quickly collected. Justina was stirless, and her lover were lying side by side, as pale and motionless as if they had been dead.

They bore them back to the inn they had so recently quitted, and laid Justina upon the bed she had occupied before, while Saville's apartment was in the upper story. The horses, exhausted at last, by the headlong speed at which they had gone, were unhitched, and brought back in triumph by the postillion, who was exalted to the dignity of a hero. Justina's maid came across, on account of his connection with the accident, and did not "hear his blushing honors" any too modestly.

Two physicians were summoned, and exercised their skill as efficaciously, that in a little while both patients were again in full possession of their senses, though bruised and shaken by the fall. And while the worthy disciples of Galen pronounced the cases over a bottle of wine in the parlor of the inn, and Mrs. De Courcey lingered by the bedside of her sleeping child, Colonel Sair made his way to his friend's room, determined to give him a sound lecture for the folly of which he had been guilty.

He found him lying quietly in bed, or the physician had left him, but with an angry frown upon his brow. His face lit up as his friend entered the room, and he stretched out his hand eagerly.

"You here, George? This is too kind, my dear old fellow! I could never forget it."

"Pshaw," said the Colonel, testily. "You need not go into the heroics over that. I only came down to save a good and innocent girl from doing something I know she would regret to the longest day she lives."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said the General jolly. "I was quite enough to attribute your presence to some remains of that old friendship we formed in India, when we were both younger and better men than we are now."

"Don't be absurd, Saville," said the Colonel, whose kind heart yearned towards his friend, in spite of his faults. "You know I love you. But your honor will have to hurry, for in a quarter of an hour I shall be off."

"How is she now, George?"

"Justina?"

"Yes."

"Sound asleep, and likely to do well—thanks be to God! But if any one came near death it was that poor child."

"I know it," said Saville, in a subdued voice. "And I am grateful to you for it, Sir, and feel grateful to Him who saved me."

"Keep your gratitude, Bantam."

"How?"

"By doing a good, and noble, and manly act."

"Explain."

"Give up Justina, at once and forever."

"Colonel Sair!" cried Saville, rising excitedly all in him.

"Mr. Bantam," he answered, "but because you sulk. I honestly believe that if you were to see this young girl, you could persuade her to fly with you. Now, you have made a bad business of an honor, I believe you will not do it."

"Colonel Sair," said he, in a melancholy smile, "You are right, George. From this moment, however dreadful an opportunity may occur to win Justina back again, I will not embrace it. I will not even see her again, unless she wishes it from a sister or daughter, and I will treat her as such. There is the hand of a penitent man upon it."

The stalwart Colonel grasped the hand.

"That is right, and fellow. I knew your kind was in the right place—I—I—knew—"

And failing to tell what he knew, the gallant fellow sobbed like a boy. This undignified show of emotion was not without its effect. The heart of Saville was drawn closer to him from that moment.

"Bore—and for me?" he said, half-playfully and half-sadly. "Why, George, I am not worthy of you."

A low knock came at the door.

"Who is there?" he asked impatiently.

"A gentleman upon urgent affairs," was the unexpected reply in a female voice. The colonel and Saville looked at each other, then at the door, and a tall, majestic woman, clad in the deepest mourning, entered the room. According to the wondering Saville, she threw back the heavy veil she wore, and disclosed the wasted, but still beautiful features of Mrs. De Courcey.

He gazed at her a moment with a mingled expression of horror and amazement.

"Can I believe my own eyes?" he murmured. "Is it possible that I see you, Evelina, once more?"

"I am Evelina," she answered calmly—"Evelina De Courcey."

"Justina's mother?"

"Her adopted mother."

She spoke in a low and manner startled him. He looked at the colonel, who obeyed the hint and moved to leave the room. But Evelina waved her hand and motioned him to stay.

"It is best that you should hear what I have to say, as since you are a friend of his, and mine," she said quietly. "I wish you to know him as he is—for during all these years, you have been deceived. Oh, if I had known what I was sheltering under my roof, and who was stealing, like a serpent, into the heart of that innocent child, I might have saved her this suffering, and shame!" she added, clasping her hands and looking at Saville.

"You are about to disclose all, Evelina?" he said, looking fixedly at her.

"All."

"Then spare yourself the trouble. I will turn away the mask, and show him what I am. George, my real name is not Bantam Saville—but Justin Errington—but a native of this country, and a most wretched man. I fought a duel, some thirteen years ago, here, in London, and killed my man. I was obliged to flee, and slickening of the old life that had brought to it, I took another name. My story purchased me a commission in the army; and to India, as you well know, my promotion was rapid. I have tried my best never to disgrace the last name I have. But if you choose to expose me now, at this late day, and tell those who have failed to recognize me, that here lies Justin Errington, the fugitive from justice, do so—and then leave me alone to die!"

"Say—I'll do as much thing," said the brave colonel. "What have I to do with Errington? I never knew him. But Bantam Saville I have known and loved from the day we first fought in the trenches side by side, and may I be shot for a deserter if I ever betray or forsake him!"

It was a brown and heavy hand that grasped the slighter one of Saville—but it was a kind and his next one, and as, in the warmth of gratitude, he carried it to his lips, a hot tear fell upon it.

"Since you know the worst, my boy, I can leave everything. Evelina," he added, turning to her, "you were about to put such a true face before a ship in the world. Let the name of Errington be swept away and be forgotten—I have another, which has never been disgraced."

"But your child—what name will you give to her?" was the calm reply.

Saville sprang up on his pillow as he heard the words.

"Have I a living child, Evelina?"

"Yes—the daughter of Rose Carroll—Rose Errington-I, should say—since she was your lawful wife——"

"Rose was—she was. But the child is mine?"

"Your child is still living. After the death of Rose, her daughter——"

"Yes. Your daughter was adopted by a New Orleans planter and his wife. She was taken away to them, till I, in my journey through the States, should claim her."

"You?"

"Yes. I knew at once whose child she must be. I adopted her for my own. I said to myself that some day you would need her, and through her I would wring your heart, even as you had wrung mine. Years went by—she grew up to be beautiful and accomplished. I took her to London."

"Oh, my God! Say no more!"

"I must. Some evil chance threw you in her way. The poor child was attracted toward you, without understanding the nature of the feeling you had awakened. You both deceived yourselves. Whatever hatred for you once loved her on her, Saville."

"Thank Heaven! I have been spared that crime!" said Saville, doubling up his child! I must have been blind, indeed, that I never saw a resemblance in her face. Oh, Rose—Rose! you have been terribly avenged!"

"Your daughter name spoke," resumed Mrs. De Courcey, "but I little knew who bore it. And till the night of the fire, no one had ever dreamed that Justina was a source of misunderstanding between us. Even when it was discovered, we trusted to time and absence to cure the passion that had grown up. We little thought to see you here, Errington!"

"Spare me—spare me!" he murmured.

"Why—I will not reproach you now. It was only the natural result of your folly and evil. And now, Justina—now that you know all, what is to be done?"

"Done?" said Saville, impetuously. "What can be done but to tell my child all, and let this folly be forgotten."

"But if she loves you——"

"Bah, Evelina. She never loved me. There was only one woman magnanimous enough to do so, and her reward was the early grave where she is lying."

Mrs. De Courcey cast down her eyes, and he saw a faint blush steal over her face. A dream of youth came back again as he looked.

"Evelina," he said, in a low voice, "can you ever forgive me for my treachery?"

"It was forgiven and forgotten long ago," she answered, with a slight sigh, twining her hand from the clasp of his, as she rose to go. "I shall then tell Justina all."

"Yes."

"Good-bye, then, for a short time."

"Good-bye, Evelina."

He sank her moodily as she went out, and turned to Colonel Sair, who still sat beside the bed.

"George, did you ever throw away a jewel, and afterwards look and long for it in vain?"

"No," answered the straightforward colonel. "I never had any jewels to throw away."

"Lucky man! I have. You will stay beside me, if I go to sleep?"

"Certainly."

He turned his face to the wall, and fell into an uneasy slumber, while the colonel, rocked softly to and fro beside him, pondered, as best he might, his astonishment at what he had heard.

CHAPTER XV.

RECONCILIATION.

Let us pass over that strange meeting between the repentant father and his child. There was sorrow and humiliation in it, but there was also affection and remembrance, and the name of the dead wife and mother was heralded, as if it had been a prayer, by the man who had so bitterly wronged her, and the child she loved.

On a sunny summer's afternoon, nearly a week after the events of which I have written, two carriages drew up before the gate of Penrydl. From one, the well-known face of Mrs. De Courcey was looking, while Justina reclined on the cushions by her side. It was her heart beating fast at the thought of the meeting so soon to take place between herself and Alfred. In the other carriage followed General Saville and Colonel Sair.

Mrs. De Courcey was no longer weak and ill. The presence of her early love, it may be, imparted that delicate color to a cheek that had long been pale. Certain it is, that Justina often laughingly called her her beautiful mother, and feigned alarm lest there would be no more beaux for the maiden to win, where once the matron came in sight. Certain it is, also, that, at any such allusion, the soft and beautiful eyes of Saville sought her face, and a grave and tender smile brightened his own. But the widow never returned the glance—never smiled on him, or gave him the opportunity to be seemed to seek, of conversing with her alone.

Was it because she had ceased to love him, and shrank back with horror at his approach? Or, was it rather that she dreaded her own heart, and dared not listen while he spoke of other days, but she should relent, and lose him still? Saville asked himself the question, as he wandered for thousand times a day; and always—so cold and guarded was she—with the same unanswering result.

The travellers did not come unexpected. Letters had been exchanged between Mrs. De Courcey and her friend every day, and as the carriages approached the house, the servants were already within the hall to welcome them. But no servants but Alfred, and Justina, with a wildly beating, gazed out of the window for Alfred, she was greatly disappointed. Had he not come? Was he angry of his conduct toward her, and a sense of her own base ingratitude smote her in the heart.

But I will not dwell on the meeting. It be can only forgive me now," was her mental reasoning, "

THE COQUETTE.

A STORY OF FASHIONABLE LIFE.

BY AN OLD CONTRIBUTOR.

The magnificent ball and supper of Mrs. Livingwood were over, and the last evening guest had departed; yet, though silence reigned in the apartment, the self-satisfied hostess was not alone present. The third servants waited to extinguish the lamps, which were now pouring forth from in the faint approach of day-dawn; but they waited in vain.

Male and motionless as a statue, Amy Selwyn, the beautiful niece of Mrs. Livingwood, leaned against the open window, with which morning played among her silken ringlets, and lifted them from a brow whose whiteness and almost haggard expression contrasted strongly with the radiant happiness which shone in that sweet face one short hour before. Thought cast hazy with the past; and as memories of other days came thronging back upon the dreamer, her fingers clinched. Again she saw a happy child at her mother's knee, gathering for her the pencilled flowers of spring, or chasing the daily task at her side, sure of that most prudent reward, a fond kiss, or as approving glance from those eyes, so soon to be closed in death. Again she wandered with the companion of her childhood, the fisherman's son, whose every look and action bits her natural protector, and whom she had encouraged in love with elderly dignity, under the circumstance had of late estranged them from each other. Another image was before her, too, one which made her heart throb, and her face rush in fat streams of hope and joy, and which even now brought the rich blood to her cheeks, and made her heart to throb so wildly, that she started, and looked about her, as though the sound of her thoughts must indeed be standing at her side.

At that moment a young man, who, until then, had remained unobserved in the room, arose from a recumbent position, and, with a slow, stealthy step, averted form, hastily crossed the room; and advancing to the side of the unconscious girl, with his two natural prudent be whom she had unfortunately offended, he whispered in her ear:

"Amy, my love, my darling, awake!"

As the spoke, the beautiful girl looked up with a timid and deprecating glance in the face of her companion; and he evidently shrank from the light of her beautiful eyes, for he turned away his head, and sighed, "I would not deal harshly with my cousin, Amy, and least of all with you, I trust; but you will find me more truly your friend than many who would flatter and persuade you that you can do nothing wrong. I would not for worlds cast coldness upon your pure treatment of my friend, Clinton Delamere, but destroyed by your own esteem and confidence in your character. I know him to be, at this moment, a wounded spirit from his country—ill and almost heart-broken; and can I feel otherwise than indignant when I see you lavishing your smiles on another, when I know that poor speaks truth, you are about to give your hand to my other? Amy, have you a heart to give me?"

"I did not promise Clinton Delamere," she said, while she vainly struggled to free her hand from that which filled her grasp; "he chose to distrust—to forget me. Surely you would not have wished me to act as he has done?"

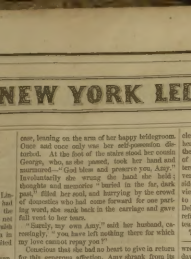
"And why did he distrust, and seek to forget you, Amy? Ah, I see you cannot answer me in coquetry, which is the base of your existence, and which leads you to act so unworthily of the one around you—to trifle for compliments—to barter looks for words, and words for feelings; a heart for a heart, and a heart for a heart, for gratification of your vanity? Yet you might, had you chosen, have made Clinton Delamere your noble, generous husband, and have escaped the miseries of suddenly delicacy or dignity; nay, you might do so still, if you choose."

The listener and left the room before the bewildered Amy could collect her thoughts sufficiently to answer. Mechanically she arose from her own apartment; and throwing herself on a low seat, leaned her head upon the window sill. The words of George Selwyn still sounded in her ears and sometimes took the form of the low tone in the bitterness of happiness and good humor.

TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.

A PERSIAN FABLE.

A traveller passing through a thicket, and seeing a fox caught in a trap, which the contemptuous had kindled as they went that way before, made up to it. On a sudden the sparks caught hold of a bush in the midst of which the fox was caught, and set it in flames. The adder entreated the traveller's assistance, when, wiping a bag to the end of a staff, reached it, and drew him out: to the tail him go where he pleased, but not to return to hurtful to men, since he owed his life to a man's compassion. The adder, however, prepared to sing him, and when he supplied how unfit it was for him to retaliate good with evil, "I shall do no more," said the adder, "what you may justly suspect of me, since when custom it is to requite benefits with ingratitude. If you cannot deny this truth, let us refer it to the first we meet." The traveller assented and seeing a tree, put the question to it, in what manner it was to be requited for its favours? "If you mean according to the usages of men," replied the tree, "by the contrary: I have long given shade to those benefited, yours to protect them from the scorching sun, and in requital they have cut down my branches, and are making of me a yoke for oxen plainly." Upon this, the adder insisting the man, he appealed to others would consider the case impartial, and immediately they met a cow. The same demanded was made, and much the same answer given, that among men it was customary to "I know it," said the cow, "by what experience; for I have served a man this long time with my milk, and now I choose, and brought him besides calf every year; but now I am old, he makes me a present pasture with design to sell me to a butcher, who will shortly make an end of me." The traveller upon this seemed confounded, but desirous of contrary, one trial more, he finally judged by the next beast they should meet. This happened to be the fox who upon hearing the story in all its circumstances, could not be persuaded it was possible for the adder to owe in no manner a beg. The adder to convince him, went in again; when the fox told the man he had now his enemy in his power, and with that he fastened the bag, and crushed him to pieces.



THE DUEL.

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"I did not promise Clinton Delamere," she said, while she vainly struggled to free her hand from that which filled her grasp; "he chose to distrust—to forget me. Surely you would not have wished me to act as he has done?"

"And why did he distrust, and seek to forget you, Amy? Ah, I see you cannot answer me in coquetry, which is the base of your existence, and which leads you to act so unworthily of the one around you—to traffic for compliments—to barter looks for words, and words for feelings; a heart for a heart, and a heart for a heart, for gratification of your vanity? Yet you might, had you chosen, have made Clinton Delamere your noble, generous husband, and have escaped the miseries of suddenly delicacy or dignity; nay, you might do so still, if you choose."

The listener and left the room before the bewildered Amy could collect her thoughts sufficiently to answer. Mechanically she arose from her own apartment; and throwing herself on a low seat, leaned her head upon the window sill. The words of George Selwyn still sounded in her ears and sometimes took the form of the low tone in the bitterness of happiness and good humor.

TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.

A PERSIAN FABLE.

A traveller passing through a thicket, and seeing a fox caught in a trap, which the contemptuous had kindled as they went that way before, made up to it. On a sudden the sparks caught hold of a bush in the midst of which the fox was caught, and set it in flames. The adder entreated the traveller's assistance, when, wiping a bag to the end of a staff, reached it, and drew him out: to the tail him go where he pleased, but not to return to hurtful to men, since he owed his life to a man's compassion. The adder, however, prepared to sing him, and when he supplied how unfit it was for him to retaliate good with evil, "I shall do no more," said the adder, "what you may justly suspect of me, since when custom it is to requite benefits with ingratitude. If you cannot deny this truth, let us refer it to the first we meet." The traveller assented and seeing a tree, put the question to it, in what manner it was to be requited for its favours? "If you mean according to the usages of men," replied the tree, "by the contrary: I have long given shade to those benefited, yours to protect them from the scorching sun, and in requital they have cut down my branches, and are making of me a yoke for oxen plainly." Upon this, the adder insisting the man, he appealed to others would consider the case impartial, and immediately they met a cow. The same demanded was made, and much the same answer given, that among men it was customary to. "I know it," said the cow, "by what experience; for I have served a man this long time with my milk, and now I choose, and brought him besides calf every year; but now I am old, he makes me a present pasture with design to sell me to a butcher, who will shortly make an end of me." The traveller upon this seemed confounded, but desirous of contrary, one trial more, he finally judged by the next beast they should meet. This happened to be the fox who upon hearing the story in all its circumstances, could not be persuaded it was possible for the adder to owe in no manner a beg. The adder to convince him, went in again; when the fox told the man he had now his enemy in his power, and with that he fastened the bag, and crushed him to pieces.

THE DUEL.

The magnificent ball

MY BIRTHDAY.

BY TAMAR ANNE RICHMOND.

My Birthday!—How, how shudder in thy triad,
How sorely have time-tracks marked on Memory's pages
A record of the year forever fled,
With all its hopes, and fears, and many changes.

My Birthday!—unconsciously the final words spoken,
And kindly hopes and wishes laid upon my ear;
Friends gaily offer many a gift and token,
And strive to add my strength, and warm to cheer.

My Birthday!—I view the diary of one dear, loving heart,
Tearfully, I gaze on each recorded page,
Wrapped in the gloom of Death's dark shadowy land,
The dear one has—the loss—how first it is to me!

My Birthday!—Ere a way had forgotten dream the Past
Appear—in vivid colors—and memory's mirror
The Future with clouds may not be concealed,
Beneath hope still looks for a brighter morn.

Baltimore, March, 1857.

THE COUSINS.

A LEGEND OF FIFTY YEARS AGO.

BY MARY W. STANLEY GIBSON.

CHAPTER I.

At an old house in the country, where I am acquainted, lives an ancient lady—one of the good old grandmothers with spectacles and silvery hair, who delights in knitting stockings, spinning at a little foot-wheel, and telling long stories to the brood of grandchildren that cluster about them. She is a genial, talkative old lady, with a pleasant smile, and a wrinkled face, full of good humor and good feeling. Guileless and simple as a child, she believes implicitly in witches and the relative—and to me, this is their greatest charm. There are children in the house—they have all grown up and married, and gone—whom she supply their place, and often sit and listen to her stories, as the night comes on. Night after night over me, and I seem to feel the presence of invisible spirits in the room. The old lady's voice grows plaintly when I light my bedroom candle, and mutter incoherent words during the door open between the rooms for the sake of warmth. I plead dislike of solitude, as a compliment to her stories, and keep willing. Let me relate one of these—substituting my language in the place of hers, but still keeping the thread of the story distinct. I will call it, as she did—"The Two Cousins," and render:

"I vouch not for the truth, d'ye see,
But tell the tale as 'twas told to me."

Almost a hundred years ago, and long before the forests of New Hampshire were cleared by the white man's axe, two fugitives came down from the hard, and settled in the southern part of the State. The brothers, James and Weston Carter, had married two English girls, and were living a life of domestic bourh here, in the heart of the wilderness, impervious to reminding of their own country.

Time went on. Sharp axes and willing hands soon cleared a space around the two little cabins, and the young wives, Alice and Mary, went singing around their rude household duties, and touches to the simple rooms, before laying down upon their beds of sickness and pain.

On a dark and stormy night, when the wind howled around the forest trees, and beat their branches to the very ground, and the rain fell down in a steady furious stream, a child was born in each of those small cabins. To the mother that was given a son with deep dark eyes and coal-black hair—to Mary and Weston, a daughter, the eyes as blue and bright as the sky upon a pleasant summer's day, and soft and silky as a sunny hair. They named them, respectively—Ralph and Marguerite.

There was great rejoicing in those honest hearts. And as the two fathers sat that night over their pipes, almost choked up with their feelings, they exclaimed—

"Look here, brother. These children, born on the same day, and each so beautiful, yet so different—why should they not grow up together and marry when they are old enough? What say you? Let us breathe them in their cradles, and bring them up as brother and sister, have no fear, and die, they will not be left to the mercy of strangers; for what Marguerite will have a kind protector in my boy, and Ralph will find a friend and companion in the girl. What say you?"

Now, Weston Carter, was a dreamy, thoughtful man. The romance of the thing pleased him, aside from the practical sense, and he agreed with a pleased smile, and answered,

"With all my heart, James—there is my hand upon it!"

The two brothers shook hands, and considered the future destiny of the children settled. But how little they knew—oh, how little they knew.

The boy and girl grew up together. Ralph, even in his infancy, was a moody and silent child; and Marguerite, as her mother had named her, standing blue eyes, was like a sprite of evil wont to torment her. Strange and unaccountable passions existed between the two. Sometimes, nay often, they played together in peace; but now and then the little child would look on the other with a compressed smile, and sneered.

"What is it, Ralph, James?—there is my hand upon it!"

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"What is it, Ralph, sullen boy?" she would say, with the fair-faced Howard is waiting there with his horse."

The girl blushed, and his black eyes flashed fire.

"Ah, I see that you are ashamed of me, for the few moments more you are, and you will not be in such haste to meet him."

"What do you mean, Ralph?"

"I see no reason why I should wait to call you over before you are mine," he said with an evil smile. "What is—is—there between you and me. No—I will not call you. You may come to me, Marguerite, and then you will be glad enough to leave him and to stay with me."

His meaning was too plainly stamped upon his dark face and in the glance of his eye, as he drew nearer to her. But while fear was aroused into crimson, as she drew back, and exclaimed—

"Ralph—what do you mean? I—I—"

"Let me make it plainer," he said, with a brutal laugh.

"You dare not."

"I like that. What is there that I dare not do?"

"Ralph—think of your father."

"What do I care for him? I fear neither man nor devil. Marguerite—"

"Then in God I put my trust."

"God is not here with us," was the bold reply. "You had much better consent at once to be mine."

He came nearer. She drew herself up to her full height, and answered, with a proud air, and dignity of an insulted queen,

"I warn you not to touch me," she said calmly. "You look handsomer than ever now, my dearest cousin," he said mockingly.

He threw his arms around her. With all her might she struck him in the face with her open hand. Then fled.

"Take that, coward!"

"Struck—and by a woman!"

"Aye—struck like a dog," she answered mockingly. "Do you wish to try it again?"

He uttered a fearful oath, and sprang upon her. There was a short, sharp struggle—a faint cry for help, as quickly stifled as uttered—then a bright blade gleamed in the air and descended again and again. Marguerite fell heavily upon the green grass, and a dark pool of blood welled out from her side. But her bright blue eyes opened for a moment ere she died. "We shall meet," she murmured, and then her head fell back, and all was over.

The murderer gazed aghast at his victim for a moment, and then fled away into the dark forest.

CHAPTER II.

That night, as Mordaunt Howard leaned against her horse, at the edge of the forest, waiting for his Marguerite, he saw her come slowly towards him, with the little bundle in her hand. He waited till she was just opposite him—feeling the while how graceful was her figure, and how fairy-like her step—and then softly he said to her:

"Well, pretty one, you are late. You should have been here half an hour ago."

And then he sprang up with the happy smile he had seen so often, nor did she speak. But she turned her face, without him, and he saw that it was very pale.

For a moment he stood silent, struck dumb with astonishment. She glided on before him—he following.

"Marguerite—Marguerite—what does this mean? Are you ill with fear?"

She did not answer. Nor did she turn towards him again, but hurried on, silently, toward her father's house. He followed her, and kept close behind her, and the same deep silence was observed. The moon shone brightly, and he could see that there were small bright purses and deliberations, he hurried on behind her.

The sun had been down almost an hour, but a faint twilight still remained to show him every object. Marguerite and Ralph had disappeared. As they hurried on so silently, he felt a strange fear creeping over him, and he knew not that he did not really breath her fret. But then, with a light laugh at his folly, he hurried after her, fragile and delicate was her form, and how light her step.

"It is no wonder," he said to himself, and hurried on.

A white lawn lay up from the road to the cottage of Weston Carter. Marguerite flitted up this like a spirit; but when her eager lover had almost touched her, he stumbled and fell. He sprang up from the ground, with a muttered oath, and hurried after. But in the cottage-door stood Mrs. Carter, laughing, good-naturedly, at his mishap.

"Ah, Howard, you are late," he said, as he came to her; "but where has Marguerite fled to?"

"Marguerite!" she cried, in surprise, and the stern face of Howard grew still sterner.

"Is she not within?" he asked, in a voice that was scarcely audible.

"Certainly not, sir. Has she not been with you?"

The mother gave him one startled glance.

"Oh! Mordaunt, my nothing of this is her poor father!" she cried. "Oh, my God, can it be that I have given life to a murderer?" cried Amos Carter, as he heard his brief, in dismay, and sank into deep for words.

Ralph cast a wistful glance upon him, and went on.

"I murdered her. She struck me, and I was too much to think of my wrath. We never loved each other, but God knows I never meant to do this. Oh, Howard, I am sorry—I am sorry!"

A sickening fear stole over the young man. He turned his back on the house, and sat down in a cheer weak and faint.

Mrs. Carter, something in unlike with Marguerite, "I am sorry," he answered mockingly. "I should very much prefer to have my with love me—but it can't be helped now."

"Cousin Ralph—I never will marry you!"

"It is too late for you to say that now, my fair cousin," was the sneering reply. "Our fathers settled that business for us, long ago. You will be my wife, Marguerite. But don't flatter yourself I take you because I love you. No—it is to sting that hound, Howard—to make the wretch and curse pale when I kiss you before him. I have no love for you, Marguerite, but I shall make you as fair the lamb he kills—but you are very beautiful and I can see in your eyes that you love me, and admire it—above all, he loves you, and to torment him, as well as to gratify myself, I must possess you. Come—name the day."

She eyed him with a contemptuous smile.

"You forget the one thing, Ralph," she said, "that I am not a child to be forced into a marriage. The girl drew herself up proudly.

"Cousin Ralph, girls are old enough to step out of my way! It is growing late, and my mother expects me home."

"Which means, I suppose," said the boy, "that the fair-faced Howard is waiting there with

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A white lawn led

THE WIND FROM THE WOLD.

BY WILLIE B. PAGE.

With a wild wind it came to my study door,
And it entered within the room;
And it shake of a ship on a rocky shore,
And the eerie colors' cups of the waves that bore
Its wild moan to its native home.

It scattered a view of that desolate hour
Of summery fear, and memory shown
Over the many blackly roaring in the light house tower,
And the one man up in the solitude pierced,
And no one to shield them from harm.

But I said to the wind that came from the wold,
Why whom does this note ring?
"—Lost in the waves of some wintry sea,
Came no much for the hearth the hilarious mood
As I do for each voice of the sea.

And then, in my heart I regretted the speech,
When the wind said, in answer to me,
A maiden has sold on that desolate beach,
Who vainly for aid her white hands did outstretch,
And that maiden—she called upon thee!

Above the white waste my delight-cast, while the wind
Was shrieking still in my ear,
My voice struck to save the one mother may bind,
And down in sea-grottoes a palace may find,
With no one to harm you a more.

No answer I made; I was silent with the weight
Of the words of the wind from the wold;
Speech comfort were lost in the ashes of fate—
I visited my hope in the depths of my heart,
But scent in my sorrow I acted.

And ever since then hath the world said of me
That I grow, in the pathway of life,
In kindness but my hand in hand ever shall be
With the sorrow of others, my sorrow,
Guided there by the wind from the wold.

FOREST SKETCHES.—NO. 18.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY COL. WALTER P. DURAND.

A NIGHT IN A SWAMP.

We had spent more time in Texas than we had at first intended; but we had no occasion for complaint. The last meal was taken at Galveston, and a good one it was; and I am still glad it was so, for it had improved my health in every way to remain fixed in the island. I love the stately young sister of our glorious Union; and that last evening spent upon her hospitable shore will never be effaced from my memory. Several of the leading citizens of the town, joined us in our repast, and, altogether, we passed a season of social joy such as makes one think upon it with fond recall, and also illustrates a page in the book of life to which, in a dark hour, we can turn back for relief and hope.

We had found that we should have the company of Carl when we left Texas; but he had concluded to take a cruise for his own amusement; and if we were willing, he would remain with us until we left the waters of the Gulf behind. Of course we availed ourselves of his offer at once; and we left Galveston with far less regret, since we did not leave him behind us.

We reached New Orleans in safety, and having spent a few days there, we took a trip up the Mississippi to the mouth of the Red River, into which latter stream we ascended, in small skiffs we had bound for Natchitoches. This place we reached in due time, and, without stopping, we took passage for Shreveport.

Shreveport is between the Red River and Lake Caddo, and to the eastward extends one of those wide, trackless regions of marsh, swamps, lagoons, and bayous which are found in that section of country.

We had two objects in going there. Ben Elliott had an uncle, on his wife's side, who resided there; and then we all had a desire to see that part of the State of Louisiana. Ben's uncle's name was Edward Smith. He was a jolly old soul—full of fun, good humor, and sound sense, and when we met on his ground he was his worthy nephew's. He welcomed us with a cordiality which at once convinced us of his genuineness, and made us feel perfectly at home ere we had been there half an hour.

"Mummy!" (so, was we glad to see us as we Uncle Ahem. "Mummy" was the maternity name by which our good host addressed his wife; and we had not been in the house an hour ere we discovered that she was a "mummy" in truth—a mummy, a mother. She was a child of the Old England; but real name was Fanny; and a better woman—a more tidy and industrious housekeeper, a more Christian partner and mother—or a more generous friend, I never met.

Ah, Mummy Smith, I never shall forget thee,—never shall I forget thy warm smile, thy cheering word, nor thy generous hospitality. Never shall I forget thy truth or thine honor; nor will the memory of thy feeble health, and of the many kind things, ever pass from me. I never will think of thee but with a blessing; and thy gentle presence comes to me through the mists of the past without a quicker pulsation of the heart, and a sense of grateful emotion.

And good old Uncle Ahem!—may his shadow never be less; and may God bless him with perfect cheerful gifts, both temporal and spiritual, while he shall continue to dwell in the land of the living!

Uncle Ahem's plantation was upon the eastern shore of the southern part of the Caddo Lake; but most of that end was then in water. The levee floods never flowed it. We reached the place in the forenoon, having spent the previous night at Shreveport village, which is the capital of Caddo parish, and found some ten miles from the Smith plantation.

After dinner, we took our rifles for a stroll. Uncle Ahem led us off to the southward and westward, intending to walk beyond the bed of the flood the plenty of game. As we descended from the upland, we entered a dense forest, chiefly of cotton-wood and pawpaw. Most of the affectation was good in surveying the shores of the great lake, and it, peeping away as though a large number of which we shot and bagged.

We had just started a return, when I saw a tall object moving among some reeds in a piece of swamp close behind us. I drew my gun to my companions to hold on, and then I crept back. I had gone some four rods when I saw that the object of my search was a flamingo. Two were before I was startled. With all my wanderings this was the first flamingo I had ever seen alive; but I knew it by its most peculiar. He stood all of six feet high, from the ground to the top of his head; his body was of a bright, fiery scarlet, with only a few jetty black feathers in the tail; his neck was of a yard long, not larger than my finger; while his legs, which shot the head with his huge, stout bill, was curved most gracefully. I had not seen anything for a month that had dead me with such desire as did that strange, rare bird. How he came there I did not stop to ask; nor how he happened to be alone; though I afterwards came to the conclusion that he had been caught by some one and made his escape.

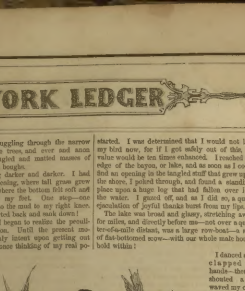
I levelled my rifle and fired, and the bird staggered. I did not aim at the head—I simply aimed at the body, trusting that if I hit him he would fall. As I saw him stagger I rushed forward; but not to seize my prey. As I came within half-a-dozen yards he uttered a loud, trumpet-like yell, and started off upon the run. His right wing was flapping loosely by his side. My shot had broken it. And that was not all. I was soon startled by his limping gait that the ball had entered his side.

Yet he ran swiftly; and I ran after him. He kept a sort of open path, though often I was obliged to dive through tangled masses of vines and wild wood in my pursuit. Sometimes I was in a stooping one. He turned wherever the way seemed best—now over the open place—then along a narrow passage—next around some log—then through a muddy pool—and so over on—

Yet I followed.

The sight of the superb scarlet plumage haunted me, and I was excited over the loss him. Not only would he make a fine morsel for the table, but I wanted him as a specimen. What an addition that form would make to my ornithological collection. I thought of nothing else—I was in the ecstasy of the moment.

And yet, in sight I have given up at length that



the flamingo began to show signs of failing. His step grew more slow, and that bare side became more apparent. Forward he went, however, slackening his pace, else I could not have kept up with him, for he had led me through some devious ways. But I was sure of his prize. He failed rapidly, and ever and anon he would stop and utter that wild, shrill yell.

Finally he stopped without turning his head—he looked to each side a few moments—and then fell forward, and rolled over upon his side. I hurried up and found him dead. My ball had broken the wing, and passed through the body, the concussion having my intensely vital part. The body was not heavy; being no larger than that of a good-sized swan, so I shouldered it easily, and having balanced my rifle on the side of it, I turned back.

Aye—I turned back!

Where was the sun? It was just shining to west somewhere, but where was the north? I looked, but I was surrounded by a dense timber, made opaque by tangled vines and hanging moss; and the only bit of blue sky I could see was directly overhead. It had always given me a sense of fearfulness before, but I had only supposed it to be the effect of the shutting out of the light by the deep wood. I looked upon my eyes in all directions, but I could more tell in which direction the sun was hanging than I could tell the number of trees that surrounded me.

I turned!

Aye—and I turned again. Which way had I come? I found my tracks, and I followed them back; but not so in a wide space, for I had been acting upon the idea that I had followed the windings of the path, while I now knew that I had been led on by a frenzy of eagerness, and had not thus followed any regular line of progress whatever. My only thought had been the regal bird, and while he had been kept in sight, no other thought had entered my mind. But now that he was dead, I came to reflect, I saw my error. An error as I have since learned, is always made by the first one I started, and its position as the flamingo fell, I found it followed in a direct line for more than half an hour; and as the speed I kept must of the time, I could not have travelled less than two miles.

The bird, by an instinct, or by a knowledge of the ground, would have followed a line of the most open around bayous, bays, and brakes; so that to find the same line would be of human discrimination.

You may safely conclude that my position was anything but pleasant. The night had settled around me, and I was alone. I had no idea that a place was cold, damp, penetrating, and miasmatic; and I knew that I was in a huge forest, abounding with the screechings of night-birds, and the croakings of frogs, and the lowing of cattle, and perhaps, ought to fill up the measure of horrors that made my heart quake again!

I had no time to lose—no place upon a small dry knoll, where grew a huge tree, which I afterwards found to be a cypress. Here I resolved to spend the sheep hising sound close by me, and I attempted to change my place; but at the third step I settled back down again. My flamingo was by my side, and I had determined to keep him there for company's sake, I carefully covered my head and face with my coat, and then placed my feet upon the body of the bird for a pillow. I have many a time slept upon a harder bed, and rested my head upon a harder pillow; but I never had so much upon a bed before in quite so thankless a place. Still exhaustion overcame my disgust, and I was soon fast asleep, and about midnight.

What awoke it was just daylight. I could tell by the color of the sky that the sun was just rising. I got up and gazed about me. I found that I had reached the knoll whereon I had left the narrow strip of dry sound, not over three feet wide, where a tree seemed to have at some time fallen.

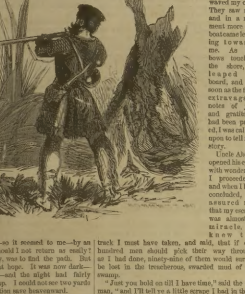
I looked now tell by the rising sun, the true points of the compass, and though I knew not the exact spot where I had left my horse, I thought I had some idea of my position. I was upon the point of climbing a tall cypress, which grew close at hand, so as if I could gain any view of the upland, when I thought I heard the sound of a human voice. I listened, and then discharged it. Yes, I was the cry of a man! It was a "hallo-o-o-o!" —long drawn out, and I was sure I recognized the voice of Old Ben. In a moment more, I heard the discharge of a gun. I caught up my rifle, and brought it to my shoulder; but it was not loaded. In my agony of the night, I had forgotten it. But I quickly loaded it, and then discharged it.

As soon as the reverberations had died away, I listened again. The hallo-o-o-o! was not repeated, and I thought it came from the direction of the water I had seen. I caught up my flamingo and started. I was determined that I would not lose my bird now, for if I got safely out of this his value would be ten times enhanced. I reached the edge of the bayou, or lake, and as soon as I could find an opening in the tangled stuff that grew upon the shore, I pulled through, and found a standing place upon a huge log that had fallen over into the water. I gazed off, and as I did so, a quick exhilaration of joyful thanks burst from my lips.

The lake was broad and glassy, stretching away for miles, and directly before me—not over a quarter-of-a-mile distant, was a large row-boat—a sort of flat-bottomed row—with our whole male household within!

I danced and clapped my hands—then I shouted and waved my cap. They saw me, and in a moment more the boatsmen began to work with the oars, I heard Uncle Ahem upon the stern board, and as soon as the extravagant joy of my delight had been partially upon to tell my story.

Uncle Ahem uproared his eyes with wonder as I proceeded; and when I had concluded, he exclaimed in a tone of



know that I was dead, and that a hundred men should pick their way through it I had done, misapprehended. I should be lost in the treacherous, swarded mud of the swamp.

"Let you hold on till I have time," said the old man, "and I'll tell ye a little scrape I had in there that'll make your hair rise."

When we reached home, Mummy caught my hand, and I verily believe she would have kissed me had not her husband been present. The men had not slept since the night before. They had been out all day, and all night, and had only wandered there a-foot. He knew he could penetrate to nearly all parts with the boat, as he often rowed it there to fish. Where the dismal swamp was the place, where I had passed my first night, on Lake Caddo.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A LADY SUBSCRIBER.—You had better summon all your fortitude and tell your husband the whole truth. The secret of the lover who has proved so hitherto. It seems unnecessary to us how a woman can have a man so long faithful to her, and even maybe by speedy exhibiting his letters to her husband. But we would wonder more if we would never submit to such treatment from one who had not the power to control her. Your husband is evidently a man of decision of character, honorable principles; and we repeat that you found the fellow out long before you had any reason to suspect him. Tell your husband the whole truth, and you will find that he will sympathize with you, and will not be lost in the treacherous, swarded mud of the swamp.

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F. C. E.—It is not necessary or usual for a proscriptions company to run their own when new-arrived grains of corn. In the first place, it is not a matter to excitement when they first make their appearance, and then they are not necessary to be seen by the eye, as they can show themselves to the proper performance of the records. Thank you for your kind wishes.

A. M. Z.—It makes a world of difference in the case, apparently and truly, of the same time. We cannot say what it would be in your case, for we do not know you; but when you wrote to her that you were going to send it, you should have done so, and not have left her to her fancies to conclude that you had changed your mind, or that you had forgotten it.

A PERFECT LOVER.—If we understand your letter, you are in love with a young lady who is engaged in professional life, and you wish to know whether or not you had better make your addresses to her. Certainly not, if you do it for the sake of a man who could seriously entertain such an idea as that of a wife.

M. A. C.—It is not the young lady's duty to inform you whether she is engaged or not. If you are interested in her, unless you wrote to her that you were going to send it, you should have done so, and not have left her to her fancies to conclude that you had changed your mind, or that you had forgotten it. We should consider such a course as that of a villain.

A. BOSTON LOVER.—If we understand your letter, you are in love with a young lady who is engaged in professional life, and you wish to know whether or not you had better make your addresses to her. Certainly not, if you do it for the sake of a man who could seriously entertain such an idea as that of a wife.

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